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Social Commerce

Factors that stimulate sellers to engage in C2C commercial activity on social networking platforms

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Social Commerce: Factors that stimulate sellers to engage in C2C commercial activity on social networking platforms

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Abstract:
Along with the increased popularity and wide usage of social networking platforms, such as Facebook, social commerce is emerging as an important category of e-commerce. In this study, we refined one type of C2C social commerce naming as C2C social commerce on social networking platforms (C2CSNP). It refers to that online users conduct both online marketing and selling activities of products/ services on social networking platforms. Taking into account that this type is rapidly growing and could have chance to replace other types of social commerce, it is essential to understand what stimulates users to engage in this type of social commerce. So the main objective of this study is to identify factors that stimulate users (sellers) of social networking platforms to engage in social commerce on those platforms. To achieve this goal, we generated an initial theoretical framework by reviewing and analysing literature, which was related to social commerce. Based on this framework, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted to the users who had selling experiences on three popular social networking platforms – Facebook, VKontakte and WeChat. Through the interpretation and analysis of empirical findings, we enriched our research framework, which covers three aspects – economic, social and technological aspects. Although the factors of economic and technological aspects play an important role for some respondents, we still highlight the significant role of social factors. The key social factors and their supporting factors, such as social support (informational support and emotional support), reputation, opportunities, etc., could greatly contribute to the improvement and development of social commerce platforms. This research supplements the existing research on social commerce, in terms of the type of C2C social commerce on social networking platforms, as well as sheds light on the industry of e-commerce.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and problem area

The emergence of Web 2.0 enables a paradigm shift in web usage (Wigand, Benjamin, & Birkland, 2008). Web 2.0 applications and characteristics such as content creation, information sharing, networking effects, simplicity etc. (Z. Huang & Benyoucef, 2013) allow users to easily share their ideas, opinions or other self-produced content on web (Chau & Xu, 2012; Chou, 2010) without having extensive knowledge about technology (Wigand et al., 2008). Under such conditions, usage of social media has become a common practice. For instance, the usage of social networking sites by American adults has increased from 7% in 2005 to 65% in 2015 (Perrin, 2015). Such wide acceptance of social networking platforms by broad masses has influenced evolution of e-commerce.

The initial goal of e-commerce is to maximize the efficiency, which is accomplished with the help of such features as sophisticated search, one-click purchase, specification-driven virtual catalogues and recommendations based on past behaviour (Carroll, 2008), while the social aspect of purchasing is often ignored. However, efficiency is not the only thing that starts to matter. At this stage, the customer preferences and experiences are not only based on information obtained from traditional mass media or corporate websites, but also on inputs of other parties that are not controlled by online marketplaces, such as peer reviews, referrals, blogs, online forums, social networks etc. (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Social aspect begins to play an important role increasingly in e-commerce. Moreover, some of the e-commerce sites such as eBay and Amazon have been influenced by both possibilities that arrived with Web 2.0 and customer demand. For that reason, these e-commerce sites have provided with the option of writing reviews on products or rating them. Through that these former pure e-commerce sites started to lean into social e-commerce segment. Therefore, new division within e-commerce called social commerce has emerged.

One of the definitions of social commerce implies that it is a form of internet-based social media that enables users to participate in both online marketing and selling of products and/or services (Stephen & Toubia, 2010; Teh, Ahmed, & Tayi, 2015). Due to the fact that there is a great variety of social media types (blogs, forums, social networks etc.) as well as various types of commercial transactions such as business-to-customer (B2C), customer-to-customer (C2C) and business-to-business (B2B) involved in social commerce, there are also different types of social commerce. One of the most common social commerce types is *peer-to-peer sales platforms*, which refers to the commerce happening between individuals on social media marketplaces (eBay, Blocket etc.). The other type is *social network-driven sales*, the goal of which is to post advertisements from different e-shops on social networking sites (Indvik, 2013). However, there is an emerging type of social commerce, which is rapidly gaining popularity. This type of social commerce allows any users of social networking platforms (Facebook, MySpace, Qzone etc.) to act as sellers or buyers on these platforms. It implies that a private user can directly advertise or sell self-produced handcrafted items, second-hand goods that he or she does not need any longer; or even run small scale retail activities. In other

words, the core of this type of social commerce is C2C commercial transaction on social networking sites.

Despite of the fact that this type of social commerce is broadly used on a daily basis, little attention has been given to it from the scientific community (J. V. Chen, Su, & Widjaja, 2016; M. N. Hajli, 2014a). Even though one of the recent academic articles (Chen, Su, & Widjaja, 2016) has studied impulse behaviour of C2C Facebook "buy and sell" groups, the strict definition of social commerce type is still not provided. For this reason, in our study, we call this type of social commerce as *C2C on social networking platforms* (C2CSNP).

Considering that usage of social networks continuously grows every year, and more and more individuals engage in social commerce using social networking platforms, *C2C on social networking platforms* has chance to become one of the leading types of social commerce. Moreover, in near future some of the existing types of social commerce would possibly disappear due to the evolvement of C2CSNP. In other words, there is a serious threat from social networking sites to intermediary C2C platform providers such as eBay. Taking into account that C2CSNP is a rapidly growing segment of social commerce, it is essential to understand what causes user's engagement in C2CSNP. Identifying factors that stimulate users of social networks to participate in social commerce can shed light on why C2CSNP becomes such popular and widely used social commerce type.

1.2 Motivation of proposed study and research question

Social commerce is a phenomenon within information system (IS) area, which is undergoing a rapid change and development. For instance, from 2014 to 2015 worldwide social commerce revenue has increased by 10 billion U.S. dollars (Statista, 2016c); time spent on social commerce by Chinese consumers is equal to 78 minutes per day; while around 50% Chinese customers make their purchase decisions based on recommendation from friends and relatives in 2015 (Liu, Chu, Huang, & Chen, 2016).). At the same time, the usage of social networking platforms for C2C social commerce purpose becomes a common practice which is ready to be applied anytime. Since more and more users are getting involved in *C2C on social networking platforms*, it is essential to understand what stands behind their choice to get engaged in this type of social commerce.

In order to understand, why individuals make decision to participate in social commerce on social networking platforms, it is important to identify factors that stimulate them to take this action. Our literature review shows that there is no such research done. So, our research can be seen as a critical foundation that provides implications for further research, which would reveal how those factors influence the decision making process. Taking into consideration that studies investigating buyers' behaviour in B2C social commerce context have already existed (Wang & Zhang, 2012), it is important to highlight seller's perspective regarding decision to engage in C2C social commerce. For these reasons following research question is proposed:

What factors stimulate sellers to engage in customer-to-customer commercial activities on social networking platforms?

1.3 Purpose

The emergence of such social commerce type as *C2C on social networking platforms* enables users to conduct selling activity at anytime from anywhere. Being able to determine what makes this type of social commerce so attractive to the user is important for understanding the development of social commerce. It would also provide implications on the transferring from e-commerce to social commerce. Understanding of this new evolving phenomenon will also shed new light on why other types of social commerce such as *peer-to-peer sales platforms* are getting less popular among broad masses.

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that stimulate users (sellers) of social networking platforms to engage in social commerce on those platforms. Besides the reasons mentioned above, gaining knowledge in this field will allow for improvement of social commerce functionalities such as feature sets that are specially designed for the sellers on current and upcoming social networking platforms.

1.4 Delimitation

There are three dimensions we want to delimitate in our study: one is the consideration of "aspect"; the second is the choice of theories; the last is research targeting subjects.

The phenomenon of social commerce covers social, business and technological aspects. The aspects of business and technology have already been investigated by some research. For instance, Hassan and Toland (2013) argued that the technologies or the functionalities of the platforms used for social commerce are one of the motivating factors for engaging in social commerce. However, the social aspect is still underinvestigated. For that reason, we delimate our study only to social aspect. That's why such factors as monetary rewards or business models are not taken into consideration.

The choice of theories also relies on the social aspect. That is why we choose the theories of Social Exchange Theory and Social Support Theory, which suit the purpose of our research in the best way. Other theories, such as Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behavior, are not included in our research as the reason of social aspect is not central for them.

When it comes to the research targeting subjects, we decide to delimit our research to the seller's perspective on C2CSNP, as we have found a gap in this area. This has been illustrated in Chapter 2, the section of theoretical background. For that reason, our study does not include investigation of buyer's intention or motivation. Moreover, the prerequisite of C2C social commerce is a seller's commercial activity, which proves the importance of studying the seller's perspective.

1.5 Introductions of the most popular social networking platforms

1.5.1 Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site/ application, purpose of that is to unite people. Its history started in 2004 when a 19-year-old Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg launched his first version of Facebook called at that time "thefacebook.com" (Carlson, 2010). Initially the site was created for students who attended Harvard. However, within one-year, Facebook gained popularity among students of other universities and started to spread worldwide reaching UK students. In 2005 the website became known as Facebook, and it expanded beyond educational institutions in 2006 (Phillips, 2007). Nowadays it is open for different users worldwide.

In order to be able to maintain users' interest to the website, Facebook constantly works on development of various features. The purpose of that is to stimulate users to keep active and entertained. Such features as News Feed, Timeline, Like etc. can fulfil this purpose. Also Facebook provides with the mobile application, which enables users to stay connected all day long depending on Wi-Fi's availability. Continuous striving for improvement allowed Facebook to become one of the most popular websites in the world. According to Alexa (2016b), which calculates popularity of the site by "using combination of average daily visitors and page views over past month", Facebook is ranked as the third top site on the web following after Google.com and Youtube.com. This statistic indicates that Facebook as a leisure-oriented site is the most visited site in the world. Facebook has around 1,6 billion users (Statista, 2016a) and is the most popular social networking site in a large number of different countries around the globe, among which are United States, Denmark, Italy and others (Alexa, 2016d, 2016e, 2016i).

Popularity of Facebook has awakened interest of various companies, which started to invest in B2C social commerce on Facebook. In such a manner Facebook became a leading platform among social networking sites when it comes to social commerce. In July 2014 Facebook started testing of "Buy" button, which meant to allow "to purchase products directly from business, without leaving Facebook" (Business, 2014). However, searching for information regarding success or failure of the buying feature did not give any results. At the same time, inability to find the store that supports this feature suggests that "Buy" button is still in development process. Nevertheless, more and more companies become interested in B2C social commerce on Facebook, investing into such type of social commerce as social network driver sales mentioned earlier.

When it comes to C2CSNP, Facebook implements a new button called *Sales Groups*. The purpose of this button is to allow users to easily find groups that specially dedicated for selling/ buying activities based on users' location and interest. For instance, those who live in Lund, Sweden, can choose among variety of different groups such as *Barn Loppis 046 område*, *Möbler & Heminredning köpes/säljes i 046-området*, *Mårtens Fälads Köp & Sälj* etc. Moreover, there are even groups that also aim for exchange, *Säljes/köpes/Bytes Staffanstorp*, or offer free things, *Gratisgrejor på smålands*. In addition, there are other ways to conduct C2CSNP on Facebook, which is presented in section *3.3.4 Common ways conducting C2C social commerce*. With that to be said, it becomes clear that C2CSNP gains popularity on Facebook and has chance to overshadow other types of social commerce conducted on different social networking platforms.

1.5.2 VKontakte

VKontakte is a leisure-oriented site, primary audience of that is from Eastern Europe. The name of the platform, VKontakte, can be translated as "in contact", which gives a hint on one of the main purposes of the site, namely, to stay in contact or, in other words, to keep in touch. VKontakte was founded by Pavel Durov in 2006 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, as Facebook's alternative for Russian speaking students. Durov remained VK's CEO until 2014 when he was dismissed from this position (Lunden, 2014).

In 2007 VKontakte reached its first 1 million users, which made Durov to reconsider the initial targeted audience of the platform. In July 2007 in one of his many appeals to the users in his blog on the site, Durov wrote that VKontakte was perceived as a universal communication tool for searching and connecting people and for that reason could not be limited by certain group of users (Durov, 2007). The expansion of users resulted in a situation where the platform started to gain popularity outside of Russia in such countries as Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. In 2016 VKontakte has gained such popularity that the platform is currently the most popular networking site in these countries excluding Kazakhstan, where YouTube leads (Alexa, 2016c, 2016f, 2016g, 2016h). Moreover, India ranks fourth by percentage of visitors (Alexa, 2016a).

In 2008 VKontakte added Ukrainian as an interface language (Durov, 2008a) and during the same year was working on development of both Belarus and English versions (Durov, 2008b). Currently VKontakte supports more than 70 languages, three of them - English, Russian and Ukrainian are official.

Also VKontakte provides users with the mobile application. So, in 2010 Durov announced that VKontakte opened possibilities for the developers to participate in development of mobile versions for different mobile devices (Durov, 2010). From that time on mobile versions are constantly updated and improved. According to Statista (2016b) number of monthly active users on mobile devices in 2014 grew from 39,7% in March to 55,6% in December. This indicates a steady growth in usage of mobile application, however, there is no newer statistic available.

Social commerce appeared rather early in VKontakte. In 2010 VKontakte opened its payment system, which allowed e-shops to connect to the system once they were registered in VKontakte. The platform did not take any commission for engagement in social commerce. In the meanwhile, a private user could top up his or her account in different ways, through other systems, payment kiosks and cashless transfers. Payment was verified through sms. (Lenta.ru, 2010). However, this feature did not survive for very long. Already in 2011 VKontakte cancelled its payment system giving as a reason that a new law, "О национальной платёжной системе" ("About national payment system"), required number of different obligations, which were no purpose to follow (RIANovosti, 2011). Nevertheless, social commerce did not cease its existence.

Due to the fact that this site is created for entertainment purposes, two prevailing types of commercial transactions are B2C and C2C. In recent years it becomes more and more common to engage in C2CSNP. Mobile application, in its turn, allows user to quickly upload and share items that are meant to be sold. It also enables sellers to respond to a potential buyer as quickly as possible and at the same time to check if a buyer's profile is reliable enough for making business with him or her.

1.5.3 WeChat

The number of mobile Internet users in China grows very fast. According to the 37th statistical report on Internet development in China (CNNIC, 2016), China had 688 million Internet users until December 2015, which accounts for over half of the total population of China. The number of new Internet users was 39.51 million in 2015, with a growth rate of 6.1%. Meanwhile, mobile phones were becoming an increasingly important means to access the Internet and main factor to drive growth of Internet users. The number of mobile Internet users in China reached to 620 million during the same year, and 90.1% of the Internet users accessed Internet by using mobile phones. The number of Internet users who only used mobile phone to access the Internet reached to 127 million, accounting for 18.5% of the total Internet users of the country. Along with these wide applications of Internet mobile terminals, mobile marketing has become an important channel for business promotion. Among the enterprises that carried out mobile marketing activities, the utilization rate of WeChat marketing and promotion had reached 75.3%, becoming the most popular mobile marketing and promotion way for enterprises in China. (CNNIC, 2016).

WeChat (named Weixin in Chinese), as the world's fastest growing social app, has become the most important and popular social media platform in China (Gao & Zhang, 2013), even though it was primarily launched as a mobile instant text and voice messaging communication service, which was developed by Tencent Holdings Ltd. (a leading provider of Internet value added services in China) on January 21th, 2011. This platform brings together messaging, social communication and games all within on an easy-to-use app. Users can send free text and multimedia messages, video calls or share photos and contents on their closed Moments social 1 network.(Weixin/WeiChat, 2016). According to Tencent's 2015 fourth quarter and annual results (Tencent, 2015), WeChat reached 697 million monthly active users at the end of 2015, and is available in over 200 countries and support 18 different languages. *The monthly active users* refer to the total number of WeChat users sending out at least on message during the last calendar month prior to the relevant date. Consumer activities in WeChat range from socializing with friends and entertaining to exchanging information and experiences regarding a product or service. (Lien & Cao, 2014).

There are two kinds of functionalities of WeChat that facilitated the C2C transaction behaviors. One is "Moments", known as "Circle of Friends" in Chinese, which means users can share and get access to accepted WeChat friends' information, creating an intimate and private communicating circle within the users' choice of close friends (Wikipedia, 2016). In the beginning, this functionality was mostly used to share pictures with captions, for instance, users usually preferred to send the photos of delicious food into Moments before eating the food. However, recently, more and more users on the "Circle of Friends" become "weishang" (micro online business seller) and often posted information about their products. The most common products on Moments are cosmetics, jewelry, bags, imported food, financial products, and travel products, etc. (C. Chao, n.d.). The other way is to create "Personal Public Account" (subscription accounts), in this way, the sellers can interact with their followers more frequently (Maruma, 2014).

WeChat Pay has become a part of daily life in China, as users can achieve transaction payments at anytime and anywhere by using mobile phones. Since 2015 *WeChat Pay* can be used in different countries (Pay, 2015). There are multiple payment methods for *WeChat Pay*, such as Quick Pay, QR Code Payment, In-App Web-based Payment and In-App Payment. Among these payment methods, both Quick Pay and In-App Web-based Payment are most often used

by the followers (potential buyers) to purchase products that have been posted by sellers on the shopping page or through the Personal Public Accounts (Pay, 2016).

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Social commerce historical background

2.1.1 Social commerce evolution

Yahoo first introduced the term of "social commerce" in 2005. And then in 2007 this term first appeared as a phenomenon in the academic work, published by Jascanu, Jascanu, and Nicolau (2007). After reviewing the historical events and critical turning points of social commerce that have been largely described in trade articles and Web postings, we considered that it is fairly important to follow the evolution of social commerce, since its inception in 2005 to 2011, which was encapsulated by Wang and Zhang (2012) through dimensions of People, Technology and Information (see table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Social Commerce Evolution Along the Dimensions of People, Technology and Information (Wang & Zhang, 2012, p. 10)

Year	People	Technology	Information
2005	People like to give and take advice from other shoppers.	Blog + e-commerce sites	User-generated content (information source: users)
2006	Shoppers generate shopping ideas through socializing.	Start-up social shopping sites; social networking functions + e-commerce sites	Content sites combining research and purchase in a platform
2007	Social shoppers are both cognitive (utility driven) and emotional (fun driven).	Search engine function + social networking function; blogs, social networking sites, video do-it-yourself media (i.e., YouTube)	Information type (text + audio + video)
2008	Social network users are not receptive to marketing.	EC sites+ social networking functions; social shopping sites	Crowdsourced content (information sources: user communities)
2009	Users are empowered by social networks of their own choices; traditional EC is male-oriented, social shopping is female-oriented (gender perspective).	Twitter (event marketing); mobile phones	Co-creating content (information sources: users + marketers)

2010	Social commerce is good for fighting with deflation (economic perspective); social saving is more pervasive in Asia and social fun is more pervasive in western countries (cultural perspective).	iPhone; f-commerce; Group-buying application in Facebook	Global crowdsourcing
2011	Shoppers have interests beyond peer influence.	Facebook; Google +; Twitter (shopping)	Niche and local content; Interest graph

According to table 2.1, on the *people* dimension, the researchers and practitioners drew more focus on shoppers or buyers; they attempted to understand humans as consumers in social commerce "from a more general emotion-based description on human being's social-gathering nature to a deeper rationale-based reasoning on the impetus of shoppers to seek recommendations and share ideas with others" (Wang & Zhang, 2012, p. 9). The critical turning points of social commerce practices on the people aspect are the global team buying and connections based on shoppers' interest graphs (Wang & Zhang, 2012). However, there was little related information about sellers as individual ones. Most of the studies focus on such type of B2C, in which enterprises use social media applications or functionalities on their existed e-commerce websites. It was one of the categories of e-commerce discussed by Z. Huang and Benyoucef (2013). They described another category as e-commerce on social networking platforms, which means adding commerce features to social networking platforms, such as Facebook used to be as the platform conducting commerce activities.

On the *technology* dimension, on one hand, IT platforms evolved from the link between blogs and e-commerce sites to the startup of social shopping sites, which means from a more commercial way to a more social way. On the other hand, mobile phones started to push social commerce even further into merging online social networks and physical retail stores, thus mobile phones in particular are considered as a fertile arena for future growth in social commerce (Wang & Zhang, 2012).

On the *information* dimension, we can see that social commerce was from only *user-generated* content further to *crowdsourced* content to the communities of users, *co-created* content between consumers and marketers; meanwhile, it turned to cover both globalized and localized *crowdsourced* content. Information type is further enriched from *text-based* to audio ones and video ones. (Wang & Zhang, 2012).

Since 2012 to the early months of 2016, in addition to following the trends that have been discussed above from three dimensions, other two aspects are strengthened a lot recently. One is that the popularity of mobile further leverage the growth in social commerce, the other is that Facebook groups are now widely used to conduct C2C commercial activities (J. V. Chen et al., 2016).

Mobile. In the recent years, along with the popularity of mobile phones, especially the emergence of smart phones (iPhone), it is important for social websites to be aware of providing appropriate web interfaces and applications on a new phenomenon trend of mobile social commerce, which refers to social commerce on this kind of pocket-size computing platform instead of the desktop generation (Liébana, Villarejo, & Sánchez-Franco, 2014). A typical example about conducting social commerce on mobile platform is the advent of WeChat in

China. WeChat is a mobile instant text and voice messaging communication service launched by Tencent (one of the largest Internet companies in China), and has already become an important social media platform in China (Lien & Cao, 2014). The users of WeChat can upload photos of merchandise to an in-app dashboard, manage orders and communicate with customers, thus representing Tencent's first move into the C2C commerce area (Retail, 2014).

Facebook C2C social commerce. Facebook users are increasingly using the site to conduct commercial activities, by posting advertisements in groups and then buying or selling items from each other. This type of group is called as a C2C Facebook "buy and sell" group in the current work. By joining in this kind of group, buyers can contact sellers directly and make a decision to buy something.(J. V. Chen et al., 2016).

2.1.2 Social commerce definition

Social commerce started with the notion of user-generated content, which was facilitated by the use of Web 2.0. Even though various definitions of social commerce have been introduced in scholarly articles, there is no standard definition to it. Therefore, a compilation of social commerce definitions from the academic literatures is listed as below, which starts by following the summary introduced by Wang and Zhang (2012) that covers years 2005-2011, continues by a more thorough understanding of the definition since 2011 onwards. In doing so, we added the relative new definitions that we found in the literature covered since 2012 to the early months of 2016 (see table 2.2).

By comparing with e-commerce, social commerce can be referred to a subset (subcategory) or next generation of e-commerce, which is conducted commercial activities or transactions, by the users (sellers and buyers) through social networking platforms. There are several similar conceptual terms that were used in this area, such as "social shopping", "collaborative shopping" and "collaborative commerce". In research, all these three terms have been used interchangeably with social commerce or treated as a subset of social commerce (Friedrich, 2015). However, Stephen and Toubia (2010) implied that when using term "social shopping" , it more refers to the activities of buyers, but "social commerce" more connects to the sellers. So through the reviewing of various definitions or terms of social commerce that used by researchers, we could find their tendency to get if they pay more attention to buyers or sellers, thus to achieve gap spotting through the literature review.

Table 2.2: Definitions of Social Commerce from the Academic Literature (Wang & Zhang, 2012, p. 15)

Year	Term	Definition/Notion	Reference
2005	Social commerce	First introduced in 2005 on Yahoo	(Rubel, 2005)
2006	Social shopping	(No definition or description)	(Zhu, Benbasat, & Jiang, 2006)
2007	Social shopping	A combination of social networking and e-commerce	(Jascanu et al., 2007)
2007	Social shopping (also called social commerce)	An emerging phenomenon "characterized by offering platforms where consumers collaborate online, get advice from trusted individuals, find the right products of a repository and finally purchase them" (p. 353)	(Leitner, Grechenig, Krishnamurthy, & Isaias, 2007)

2008	Social commerce	(No definition or description)	(Ganesan, Sundaresan, & Deo, 2008)
2008	Social commerce (via social enterprise / social business)	"Social businesses differ from traditional not-for-profit institutions in that the social businesses must have profits to successfully function. And, they differ from traditional profit-based businesses in that their profits are used to support social causes rather than to increase the wealth of investors, managers, and owners" (p. 7).	(Massetti, 2008)
2009	Social shopping (also called social commerce)	A new type of e-commerce linking shopping and social networking through social media.	(Wang, 2009)
2009	Social shopping	"An extension of Business-to-Consumer E-commerce where consumers interact with each other as a main mechanism in conducting online shopping activities, such as discovering products, aggregating and sharing product information, and collaboratively making shopping decisions" (p. 1)	(Shen & Eder, 2009)
2009	Social shopping	A kind of e-commerce where people can comment and review items in blogs or online communities	(Kang & Park, 2009)
2009	Social shopping	Social shopping is shopping services provided by social networking sites. It can also be EC sites provide social networking function.	(Cha, 2009)
2010	Social commerce	"An emerging trend in which sellers are connected in online social networks, and where sellers are individuals instead of firms" (p. 1)	(Stephen & Toubia, 2010)
2010	Social commerce	"Refer to both networks of sellers and networks of buyers; it is the evolution of 'e-commerce 1.0' which is based on one-to-one interactions, into a more social and interactive form of e- commerce" (p. 2).	(Afrasiabi Rad & Benyoucef, 2011)
2011	Social commerce	"Social commerce is emerging as an important platform in e-commerce, primarily due to the increased popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter" (p. 1). They summarized three major attributes of SC: social technologies, community interactions, and commercial activities.	(Liang, Ho, Li, & Turban, 2011)
2011	Social shopping and social commerce	"Social shopping and e-commerce are not dichotomous concepts. Social shopping can be an evolutionary concept, meaning a singular EC site advancing with social networking functions, or a synergistic concept, meaning EC sites connecting with the other social networking sites to form strategic alliance." (p.51)	(Wang, 2013)
2012	Social commerce	"Social commerce is a form of commerce mediated by social media and is converging both online and offline environments." (p.16)	(Wang & Zhang, 2012, p. 16)

2013	Social commerce	"The explosive growth of social networking sites (SNSs) has given rise to a new electronic commerce (e-commerce) paradigm called social commerce (s-commerce). S-commerce users employ SNSs as a tool for collaboration to share online shopping experiences and product- and service-related information. In addition, s-commerce users make informed purchases and obtain the best prices by exchanging trustworthy information on certain products and services, which is a unique strength of s-commerce." (p.1)	(S. Kim & Park, 2013, p. 1)
2013	Social Commerce	SC can be considered a subset of e-commerce that involves using social technologies to assist e-commerce transactions and activities.	(Yadav, De Valck, Hennig-Thurau, Hoffman, & Spann, 2013)
2014	Social Commerce	"Social commerce has emerged from the advancements in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and Web 2.0 applications, where consumers are empowered to generate content and also interact with businesses." (p.2)	(M. N. Hajli, 2014a, p. 2)
2015	Smart Social Commerce	They summarized social commerce from the seller point of view as a collaboration among those, which ensures they gain money out of it.	(Salvatori & Marcantoni, 2015)
2016	Social Commerce	They defined "s-commerce as a new way of doing commerce in a collaborative and participative way, involving interactions among all the actors of the value chain. S-commerce aims at enhancing enterprise openness and actor participation and collaboration to achieve greater economic value to the whole value chain." (p.1)	(Baghdadi, 2016, p. 1)

Social commerce from individual seller's perspective was first defined by Stephen and Toubia (2010). Table 2.2 shows that before the year of 2010, researchers preferred to use term "social shopping" when researching the phenomenon of social commerce, after 2010, they started to use term of "social commerce". Recently, Salvatori and Marcantoni (2015) again summarized social commerce from the seller's perspective as a collaboration among users, which ensures they gain money out of it. While "social shopping" and "social commerce" were used interchangeably by researchers, such as Wang (2013). A common adopted perspective is that social shopping is a subset of social commerce, but some marketing research (e.g., Stephen and Toubia 2010) defined them as two separate concepts with the main difference being that social commerce connect sellers, yet social shopping connects customers (Wang & Zhang, 2012). Moreover, the emphasis in Stephen and Toubia (2010) definitions on connecting individual sellers or customers implies that social commerce and social shopping are i2i (individual-to-individual) or C2C (customer-to-customer). Meanwhile, Facebook groups are now widely used to conduct C2C commercial activities, with seller offering either new and secondhand items or services for sale via advertisements they post on the site (J. V. Chen et al., 2016). We found that there were already some studies which considered buyer's perspective but fewer on sellers' perspective. Based on this gap, we decided to treat our own definition of social commerce from a seller's perspective, especially an individual seller, and conducted our study on C2C or i2i social networking platforms.

2.1.3 Social commerce in this study

According to the sections of social commerce evolution and various definitions, on one hand, we found that the trend of social commerce development is from Commerce-based to Social-based, which means the category of developing commercial features on social networking platforms becomes more popular and concerned. On the other hand, since there is limited research and few definitions based on C2C social commerce, but this type has been already widely used by the online users of social networking platforms such as Facebook, VKontakte and WeChat, etc. So, in our study we propose a new term for this type of social commerce, which is *C2C social commerce on social networking platforms (C2CSNP),* and study it from the perspective of sellers. The transaction activity based on this type, refers to a buyer who see the seller's posting and is interested in making a purchase, and then contacts the seller directly to make a buying arrangement, such as seeing or testing the product, or making a payment and then receiving the item (J. V. Chen et al., 2016).

2.2 Theoretical choices

By considering People, Management, Technology and Information dimensions (Wang & Zhang, 2012), social commerce includes multiple disciplines, such as marketing, computer science, sociology and psychology (Friedrich, 2015). As a result, various theories have been used in different aspects, no exception in the area of Information Systems. According to a conceptual framework proposed by Attia, Aziz, and Friedman (2012), which focused on the impact of social networks on behavioral change, there are mainly three theories assisting to explore and investigate the social networking effect on individual behavior: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). However, we did not use any of them by considering the purpose and delimitation of this study. Other reasons are presented in the following sections.

2.2.1 Motivation of excluding Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Davis 1989) has been used as an initial theory when researching the adoption or user expectations of social commerce as an Information System (Z. Huang & Benyoucef, 2015; Liébana et al., 2014). Since it is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use a new technology, it is not quite applicable to our study. Our study is based on the fact that our researching targets (sellers) have already accepted and used the social networking platforms fluently. We aim to identify factors that stimulate an existing user to change from social behavior to commercial behavior when they use the social networking platforms, thus we decide not to use TAM in our study.

2.2.2 Motivation of excluding Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

TPB, a theory developed by Ajzen (1991), is an extension of TRA. Both of these two theories aim to explain the intension behavior reasons from the aspects of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. For instance, TPB has been used to create a model to validate the relationship between the subjective norms and trust, social support, attitude and intention when analyzed consumer behaviors in social commerce phenomenon (Shin, 2013). How-

ever, TPB is normally used in quantitative researching method (Renzi & Klobas, 2008), but it does not fit with our study, so we decided to skip these two similar theories.

2.2.3 Choosing theories from "social-aspect"

We conducted our study based on social aspect, which means the sellers take social activity firstly and then turn to transaction activity. Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011) claim that the main purpose of using social media is communication, also for self-presence, knowledge sharing, idea exchange, conversation and collaboration (Almeida, de Almeida Neris, de Miranda, Hayashi, & Baranauskas, 2009). Conversely, the major goal of users visiting e-commerce websites is to find a product they want to buy and determine, which vendor they want to buy it from based on price, reputation, product availability and service (Manvi & Venkataram, 2005). Therefore, it is plausible and necessary to inherit the theories that have been used in social media research area. Social Support Theory (SST) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) were selected for our study and reasons are provided in the following sections.

2.2.4 Motivation of choosing Social Support Theory (SST)

Liang et al. (2011, p. 3) applied Social Support Theory (SST) to investigate "why social or Web site design factors are more important in determining the user's intention to continue to use and to conduct social commerce?" They stated that social support is a concept in sociology that measures how individuals feel about being cared for, being responded to, and being helped by others in their social groups (Cobb, 1976; House, 1981). People hope to satisfy their social needs for belonging and support by social interactions (Liang et al., 2011; Maslow, Frager, Fadiman, McReynolds, & Cox, 1970). Researchers found that better social support could lead to better relationship quality, which in turn can result in higher customer loyalty. Therefore, the inclusion of social support and relationship quality in social commerce research can result in unique contributions to our understanding of users' commercial behavior in social networking, which was also illustrated by Liang et al. (2011) in their study.

2.2.5 Motivation of choosing Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Since social commerce starts with and depends on the notion of user-generated content, the understanding of the motives of why individuals participate in it appears fundamental. Thus Social Exchange Theory (SET), which derives from a part of Theory Model of Social Media proposed by Pan, Crotts, and Sigala (2012), can be properly used in our study to investigate sellers' motivation on participating C2CSNP. Moreover, SET was also used in researching e-commerce transaction area, for instance, Salam, Rao, and Pegels (1998) applied social exchange framework to investigate how trust economic incentive play roles in facilitation of e-commerce over the Internet.

Furthermore, Plouffe (2008) motivates that there are three primary reasons to conduct SET when exploring the phenomenon of C2C exchange. Firstly, SET's primary unit of analysis is based on individual, between-party relationships. Secondly, SET is predicated on the notion of voluntary exchange, which is consistent with researching our study, as sellers are free and voluntary on deciding to adopt and use social media platforms. Finally, the application of SET

to the C2C phenomenon is consistent with the view of marketing as exchange, which is also illustrated by (Bagozzi, 1975; Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

2.3 Social Support Theory (SST) Introduction

Social support is also widely being offered through social media platforms, such as blogs, Facebook groups and online support groups; even though in other areas like public health, it is more related to loneliness and coping with stress. Schaefer, Coyne, and Lazarus (1981) indicate that people need both intangible and tangible support when they are under health stress. Since virtual interactions on social media platforms are often relied on messages, online social support which may help social media users is usually intangible in nature, social support includes informational support and emotional support (Coulson, 2005; K.-Y. Huang, Nambisan, & Uzuner, 2010; Madjar, 2008).

Informational support refers to providing messages, in the form of recommendations, advice, or knowledge, which could be helpful for solving problems (House, 1981; Taylor et al., 2004)

Emotional support refers to providing messages that involve emotional concerns such as caring, understanding, or empathy (House, 1981; Taylor et al., 2004). In particular, emotional support involves listening and showing sympathy or trust (House, 1981).

All in all, these two types of support are the primary targets for investigating social support in virtual communities. When social support, no matter informational support or emotional support, existed in a social network, and was transferred by users in the form of messages, it would be a natural for community members to share commercial information and recommendations as an extension of their sharing of other supportive information. The frequent sharing of supportive information can also enhance friendship and trusts among users, which may further increase the intention to conduct commercial activities. Thus we can derive a linkage between social support and the intention to conduct social commerce. (Liang et al., 2011, p. 72).

2.4 Social Exchange Theory (SET) Introduction

Social Exchange Theory (SET) was initially developed by Homans (1958) for analysing human behaviour. Homans best summarized SET as below:

> Social behavior is an exchange of goods, material goods but also non-material ones, such as the symbols of approval or prestige. Persons that give much to others try to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are under pressure to give much to them. This process of influence tends to work out at equilibrium to a balance in the exchanges. For a person in an exchange, what he gives may be a cost to him, just as what he gets may be a reward, and his behavior changes less as the difference of the two, profit, tends to a maximum. (Homans, 1958, p. 11)

In a simple word, people interact to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs (Salam et al., 1998). Hence, there are three primary reasons from social media's perspective to explain why people engage in a social exchange activity: first is an expected gain in reputation

and influence on others; second is an anticipated reciprocity on the part of others and last one is direct reward (Pan et al., 2012).

Concepts of the SET theory. *Rewards* could be material (economic), but more often refers to social aspect, such as opportunity, prestige, conformity, or acceptance; the concept of ***cost***, notably rewards foregone, or the notion of opportunity costs from economics. Emerson (1976) Identified *cost* as a troublesome word in the exchange vocabulary, and stated that it contains two basic meanings: one is in the form of aversive stimuli encountered in a social transaction, for instance painful or boring "work" performed; another is in the form of rewards foregone, take an example, time and effort that could have been spent otherwise, for some other valued return. (Emerson, 1976).

Cook and Emerson (1987) synthesized the conceptual and theoretical material inherent in SET to gain a common set of principles, in which each of them is uniquely related to C2C (or i2i) exchange:

- Actors have a set of values, goals, or purposes and their behavior will be consistent with these;
- Interaction with others is voluntary, based on self-interest; and
- Interpersonal contact is premised upon giving and receiving of roughly equivalent value and is governed by norms of reciprocity and fairness. (Plouffe, 2008, p. 6)

Therefore, SET is an appropriate perspective on researching the individuals' intention of the C2C social commerce phenomenon. Plouffe (2008, p. 9) confirms that this kind of individual to individual exchange is based on both the giving as well as the receiving, which means being part for a community of equals who share will also motivate other individuals to participate. They labeled the construct of "community connectedness" as "the extent to which an individual perceives and values the broader sense of community and of being connected with others as a result of engaging in C2C exchanges".

2.5 Related concepts

Previous studies used concepts such as "relationship quality" (M. N. Hajli, 2014a; Liang et al., 2011); "trust" (M. Hajli, 2012; N. Hajli, 2015b; Shanmugam, Sun, Amidi, Khani, & Khani, 2016); "network" (Shanmugam et al., 2016) and "information/knowledge sharing" (Jiang, Ma, Shang, & Chau, 2014; Yin, Liu, Yang, Mirkovski, & Zhao, 2014) to investigate and illustrate the motivations of users to engage in social commerce (B. Lu, Fan, & Zhou, 2016); the adoption of social commerce (Friedrich, 2015; M. Hajli, 2012); social commerce purchasing intention (N. Hajli, 2015b; B. Lu et al., 2016) and the constructs of social commerce (N. Hajli, 2015b; Shanmugam et al., 2016). So we derived these concepts as the essential to conduct our study, which are introduced in the following sections.

2.5.1 Relationship Quality

Relationship quality, as a key concept in relationship marketing, plays a partial mediating role in enhancing the intention to conduct social commerce and the intention to continue using it. It also has a close relation with social support, which means that social support measured by informational support and emotional support, has a significant positive effects on relationship

quality. (Liang et al., 2011).

Relationship quality contains of three major components according to the previous studies: trust, relationship commitment and relationship satisfaction (Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, & Iacobucci, 2001). *Trust*, as a central concept in social commerce, will be introduced detailed in the next section; *Relationship Commitment* is a main factor for a long-term relationship (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), it indicates the importance of the relationship with service/product provider that maximize the efforts to guarantee the relationship (Gustafsson, Johnson, & Roos, 2005). *Relationship Satisfaction* refers to the affective state of people from their complete evaluation of the relationship they have with other people/ platforms (Wulf et al., 2001). In our study, relationship quality is not only limited within the relationship between sellers and buyers, but also we extend it into the relationship between sellers and social networking platforms, which means the sellers' trust, commitment and satisfaction to the platforms. That has been illustrated by (Zhou, Zhang, & Zimmermann, 2013), as they assess relationship quality respecting both to the users and social networking sites.

When a user feels that a relationship with a social network is good, the user is more willing to share valuable commercial information or recommend products online or seek commercial opportunities from online friends. Hence, the role of relationship quality in social commerce cannot be ignored. (Liang et al., 2011).

2.5.2 Trust

Trust is a central issue in social commerce (M. N. Hajli, 2014b) and very important concept in human relationships. Need in trust emerges when there is no certainty in someone or something. Difficulty to predict behaviour and outcomes also call for trust (Seligman, 1999). Merriam-Webster (2016b) online dictionary defines trust as "belief that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, effective, etc." With that in mind, it is possible to conclude that trust is a pre-condition for different kinds of social activities.

Seligman (1999) states that maintenance of economic exchange relations becomes possible due to trust. This implies that the concept of trust is crucial for any type of commerce. However, it can be of special value for social commerce as principle of socialization is in the very core of this phenomenon. Participation in social commerce requires a user trusting both the platform, on which commerce is performed, and the other participant involved in a transaction. The reports on fraudulent activities when it comes to online marketplaces are numerous. Payment transaction might not be secure enough and an unauthorized party might access sensitive data, such as credit card number. The goods might not be shipped or the condition of the goods is far below of what has been advertised by the seller. Taking this into account, it is essential to understand if trust attracts sellers to engage in C2CSNP or not.

Different researches have been conducted on the role of trust from a consumer perspective in both B2C and C2C e-commerce and social commerce (Corbitt, Thanasankit, & Yi, 2003; Guo, Wang, & Leskovec, 2011; D. J. Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008; Y. Kim, Chang, Wong, & Park, 2014; Y. Lu, Zhao, & Wang, 2010; Teh et al., 2015). Although there are studies that include the seller perspective (J. Chen, Zhang, & Xu, 2009; Wu, Li, & Kuo, 2011), they tend to focus on both participants involved in commerce. In addition, these researches do not have as the subject of their study social networking platforms, which means that C2CSNP is not

researched. Considering both that a gap in studies and that trust is an inherent part of social commerce, the concept of trust is included into this research.

The relationships between theories (SST and SET) and trust are listed as below:

Social Support and Trust. According to the research findings on the applications of social commerce constructs by Shanmugam et al. (2016), social commerce constructs, such as online forums, ratings, communities, reviews and recommendations (N. Hajli, 2015a), lead to greater emotional and informational support. The effect of social support, including emotional and informational support, increases participants' trust in online communities. Therefore, trust is seen as a deriving value obtained from conducting social support. Moreover, Crocker and Canevello (2008) argued that the availability of social support offer trust to individuals participating in an online community.

Social Exchange and Trust. SET presents a cost benefit analysis with respect to social interaction. If the exchange is perceived to be beneficial, then the individual is likely to enter into an exchange relationship. Trust is used in the calculation of perceived cost. High trust would lead to a perception of low cost, and vice versa. Studies of interpersonal exchange situations confirm that trust is a precondition for self-disclosure, as it reduces perceived risks involved in revealing private information. (Dwyer, Hiltz, & Passerini, 2007; Metzger, 2004).

2.5.3 Information / Knowledge Sharing

Information/ knowledge sharing behaviours in the context of social commerce. The behaviour of information sharing or knowledge sharing can be seen as the basement to conduct commercial activities, or the pathway to achieve social support, which means offering advice and sharing experiences through social networking platforms providing a source for online social support.

Information Sharing. From Wikipedia, this term traditionally referred to one-to-one exchanges of data between a sender and receiver. Information is defined as data endowed with relevance and purpose, in other words, it means data in context (Serban & Luan, 2002). Individuals from different backgrounds can easily share information with each other because of the great Internet penetration (Yin et al., 2014). In the context of social commerce, sellers are spurred to contribute information with the aim of building their reputations and increase the revenues of their own online stores (A. F. Chao & Yang, 2012).

Knowledge Sharing. Since Knowledge combines information with individual, group, and organizational experience and judgment together, knowledge sharing is then considered to be an activity through which knowledge (information, skills or expertise) is exchanged among people, friends, families, virtual communities (like social networking platforms), or organizations (Serban & Luan, 2002).

In the area of C2CSNP, both sellers and buyers are expected to build relationships and improve the relationship quality with other users (Yang, Sia, Liu, & Chen, 2016). For sellers, in addition to simply exchange information with others, sharing information or knowledge can enrich their relationship with buyers (Smith, 1998), which could help to lower cost, increase customers satisfaction and retention, and enhance revenues (Jayachandran, Sharma, Kaufman, & Raman, 2005). Furthermore, when sellers engage in the behaviors of information sharing or knowledge sharing on a social commerce platform, they tend to pay more attention to attract

fans and put more effort to become opinion leader. To gain more fans, sellers may participate actively by posting products; to become opinion leaders, they will share more experiences. All in all, information or knowledge sharing behaviors plays an important role for sellers on social commerce platforms. (Yang et al., 2016).

2.5.4 Network

Social interaction is an integral part of human life. By interacting with others an individual establishes social relations and creates social networks. Such networks can include friends, colleagues or other personal contacts (Dictionary.com, 2016). Development of digital technologies adds a new dimension to the meaning of the term "social network". This meaning implies online communities of people united by similar interests who use website or other technologies to communicate with each other (Dictionary.com, 2016). Popularity of social networking websites, in its turn, contributes to associating this term with online activity.

One of the reasons for an individual to become active on social networking sites is possibility to build his or her own network. These networks allow a user of social networking platforms to socialize not only with people who are currently present in user's life, but also to maintain relations with those, who otherwise would be lost. Moreover, features that allow seeing a list of "friends of a friend" enable users to have access to a large "database" of users that can be interesting or even potentially useful.

The evolution of e-commerce into social commerce is dependent not only on emergence of Web 2.0 technologies, but also on user's need to be part of social online networks. Without the ability to build networks, social media and not least social networking platforms lose one of its main purposes: ability to unite people. Social commerce, in its turn, would not be able fulfil its goals such as networking, collaborating and information sharing (Wang & Zhang, 2012). Taking this to consideration, it is possible to state that the concept of networks is crucial for conducting social commerce on social networking sites and therefore has to be included in this research.

2.6 Theoretical framework

In order to establish a consistent approach to guide our research and data collection, we compiled our research of related theories and concepts, which have been detailed introduced in the previous sections, into a theoretical framework as illustrated in table 2.3. This figure reveals the meanings of the main theories - SST and SET, and primary concepts – Trust, Commitment, Satisfaction, Information/ Knowledge Sharing and Network, which we used in our study. There are mainly two reasons for developing this framework. One is to illustrate our focus areas or main themes for our investigation in establishing factors that stimulate individual sellers to engage in social commerce area; the other is to guide our research and provide an initial thematic guide for our interview design which was suggested by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) as the first stage of an interview.

Table 2.3: Theoretical Framework

Themes (Theories)	Potential Factors	References
Social Exchange Perspective (SET)	Rewards: opportunity, prestige, conformity, or acceptance (social aspect).	Chapter 2.4
	Cost: rewards foregone (time and effort that could have been spent); painful or boring "work" performed.	
Social Support Perspective (SST)	Informational Support: providing messages, such as recommendations, advice, knowledge, or helpful for solving problems.	Chapter 2.3
	Emotional Support: caring, understanding, empathy.	
Relationship Quality	Trust	Chapter 2.5.2
	Commitment	Chapter 2.5.1
	Satisfaction	
Sharing Behavior	Information/ knowledge Sharing	Chapter 2.5.3
Connectivity	Network	Chapter 2.5.4

3 Research method

3.1 Research strategy

Making choice regarding research methodology is the most important part of research process (Recker, 2012). In order to be able to make the right choice, it is crucial for the researcher to have good understanding of both the nature of the research and the research goal that has been set. Since our research purpose is to identify what factors stimulate sellers to engage in commercial activities on social networking platforms, as well as our research target is the seller's "text", in terms of the text that captures records of what they "have said, done, believed or experienced about the specific phenomenon" of social commerce, which are stated as the simplest distinction of qualitative methods with quantitative methods (Recker, 2012, p. 97). Therefore, we thought qualitative methods are well suited for our study.

After choosing qualitative method as our research method, the next step is to select a technique of data collection that fits in this method. As one of the characteristics of qualitative methods is "researchers as a key instrument", which explained by Recker (2012, p. 88) that qualitative researchers collect data and information by themselves, instead of through an instrument, yet often through face-to-face interaction, therefore, we employed interviewing as our data collection technique. Furthermore, according to (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), the qualitative interview, as a research method, has a privileged access to people's everyday world, if compared to some basic scientific quantitative facts that obtained by experiments and questionnaires. This motivation could also aid us to understand interviewee's meaning of central themes of their lived world, in terms of their feelings and experiences on social commerce.

As the major disadvantage of qualitative methods is the difficulty in generalising to a large population, and by considering that our study is based on the selection of a variety of social networking platforms, we chose only three main platforms – Facebook, VKontakte and WeChat. The selection reasons will be explained in the following section – Chapter 3.3.

3.2 Research design

According to (Bhattacherjee, 2012), when considering research designs, it differs based on whether the researchers start at observation (inductive research) or whether they start at a theory (deductive research). So basically, we followed the process of deductive research when designing our own research. Figure 3.1 as below outlines our researching process. In the beginning, we identified our problem area – social commerce. Through the literature review, we got a clear understanding of the evolution and various definitions of social commerce. Also we found a gap that there was little research on C2C social commerce, especially for the investigation on seller's perspective. After a comprehensive theoretical reviewing on social as-

pect, we designed our own theoretical framework and generated some main factors, which need to be verified in our empirical phase. In the phase of data collection and analysis through the interviews, we tested our theoretical framework, and found some new factors. These factors are presented in our findings and discussion sections.
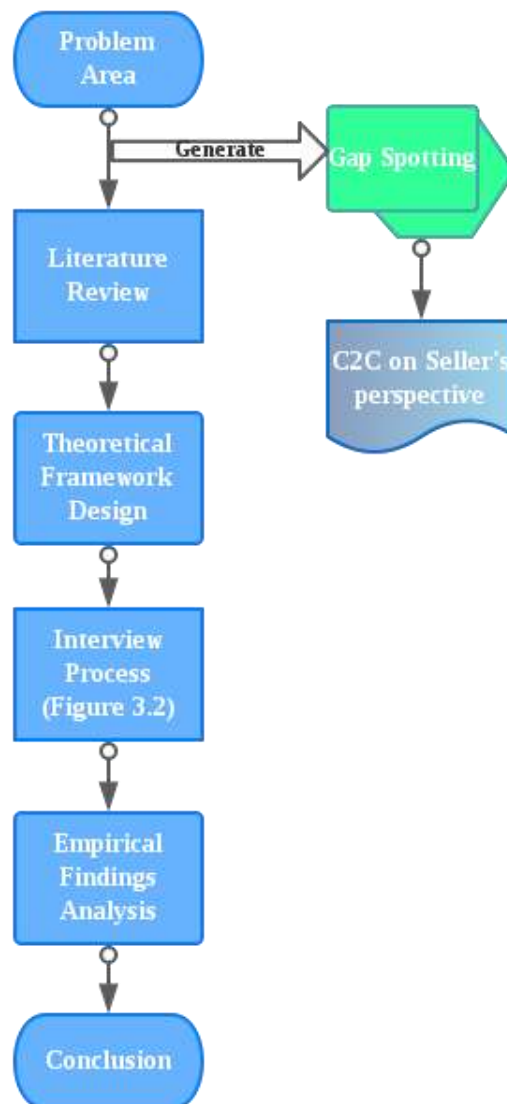

Figure 3.1: Research Design Process

3.3 Motivations of platforms selection

For the purpose of this research three social networking sites/ applications have been chosen - Facebook, VKontakte and WeChat. The choice of these platforms can be motivated by several reasons discussed in the following sections. We chose these three platforms by the considera-

tion of "*leisure-oriented sites*" category; "*Affordance*" of the platforms and the "*Popularity or Location Coverage*" of the platforms.

3.3.1 Categories of social networking platforms

Social networking sites/ applications, also called social networking services, are platforms that have been created for the purpose of uniting people into social networks. These platforms are more often used for the purpose of social commerce. Social networking sites/ applications may target different customers (youth, professional network, individuals with the same hobby) and have different goals (photo sharing, discussing particular topic, building business network etc.). Turban, Strauss, and Lai (2015) classify social networking landscape as following (see table 3.1):

Table 3.1: Categories of social networking platforms (Turban et al., 2015, p. 34)

Categories	Purpose	Examples
Leisure-oriented sites	Socially focused public sites are open to all users. Companies also use for promoting their products	Facebook, hi5, Google+, MySpace.
Professional networking sites	Focusing on business networking	LinkedIn, Xing, Biznik.
Media sharing sites	Enable focusing on the display and sharing of user-generated multimedia content, such as video and photos.	YouTube, Instagram, Flickr.
Virtual world sites	3D virtual worlds built and owned by their residents (the users).	Second Life, Webkinz, Hobbo.
Communication sites that possess social networking capabilities	Many socially oriented websites facilitate communication.	- Microblogging/ presence applications: Twitter, Plurk, Sina WeiboUnited; - Communication products: Microsoft PointShare, SaleseForce ChatterEnterprise-owned sites; - Private sites owned by companies: Starbucks, Disney, Dell.

When it comes to leisure-oriented sites, it is important to add that this category is created mainly for entertainment purposes. Therefore, its platforms support and justify usage of most of diverse features available for social networking sites including video, photo and link sharing, formation of various groups, initiation of different discussions and voting etc. All these features enable fast adoption and development of various social phenomena, one of which is social commerce. At the same time, a large amount of users, who are involved, contribute to spreading of these phenomena. Considering specialties of these we decide to put the focus of this research in *leisure-oriented sites* category.

3.3.2 Consideration of Affordance

The evolution of social activities that are performed on social networking platforms depends on the needs of the users. Transformation of the user's needs happens through the time and leads to the shift of a user's perception regarding the platform's *affordances* (Gibson, 2015), which influences the way in which platform is used. In that context, the usage of social networking platforms for C2C social commerce purposes is a result of the newly emerged needs of the users.

Despite of the fact that C2CSNP is a relatively new phenomenon, it begins to take an important place in users' daily social activity on social networking platforms. Advertisements regarding different products and services are becoming a common occurrence on a user's timeline. Due to the fact that 85% B2C social commerce occurs on Facebook (Morris, 2015), it is possible to assume that C2C social commerce also prevails on leisure-oriented sites. Even though most of the social networking platforms support similar capabilities and services (Turban et al., 2015), different purposes, for which they have been created, reflect different needs of the users. These needs assign different affordances to different categories of social networking sites. The broader purpose of the social networking platforms, the broader affordances assigned to the categories by the user. That is why it is important to consider affordances in our research.

3.3.3 Consideration of Popularity

In order to be able to determine factors that stimulate users to start acting as sellers and engage in social commerce on leisure-oriented social networking sites/ applications, it is not enough to focus only on one social networking platform such as Facebook. User of different platforms can have different perspective on that matter. However, from the existing population of social commerce we have made a selection of three following social networking sites: Facebook, VKontakte and WeChat, for at least two reasons. Firstly, our choice is due to the fact that these platforms are listed among the 20 most popular social networks in the world (Statista, 2016a). Secondly, our choice also provides a global coverage of social networks, as Facebook is currently known as the most global social media platform, VKontakte is the most popular platform in Eastern Europe and WeChat is one of the leading social networking platforms in China.

3.3.4 Common ways conducting C2C social commerce

Examining the ways, in which a private user conducts C2C social commerce on the platforms chosen for this research, we have discovered four common for all three platforms ways. They are:

- A seller uses his or her own page to occasionally sell products or services;
- A seller registers specially dedicated to social commerce page or group, which has a unique name. Having a separate page/ group most likely implies that the seller engages in social commerce on a daily basis, i.e. owning a small retail shop on social networking sites.
- A seller joins a group or a community that unites people who want to sell or buy different things. These groups can be classified by categories or place of living;

- A seller uses different groups that are not created for social commerce purposes in order to occasionally sell different products or services.

The fact that there are common ways to conduct social commerce on different social networking sites proves that users with different background perceive affordances of these platforms in similar way.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

Interviewing is the most prominent technique to collect data when conducting qualitative research method (Recker, 2012). Since in this paper, we aim to identify what factors stimulate the sellers to change their behaviour from a social way to a commercial way, interviewing is a better method to understand and explore the interviewees (sellers)' real opinions and considerations. Based on that, we employed the seven stages of an interview inquiry that has been suggested by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) as figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) seven stages and applicable section for each stage

Moreover, since semi-structured interview is considered as one of the most commonly used qualitative research method (Myers & Newman, 2007), and we found that this type of interviews was the most appropriate method for our study. Through following an interview guide to conduct whole interview procedures, the interviewers can flexibly adjust the questions or bring up new questions to make sure the interviewing aligns with the research purpose.

3.4.1 Thematizing the interviews

In the first stage of interview process – thematising, it involves clarifying the purpose of the study and the themes of the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For the purpose of the study, we defined the research question and described the purpose in the first chapter of our thesis. For the themes of the study, we generated a theoretical framework in the second chapter by conducting literature review and theories/ concepts selection. Thus, the research question and purpose, the description of problem area and our theoretical framework created the fundamental basis for the second stage of the interview process, which is named interviewing design.

3.4.2 Designing the interviews

We started with designing of interview guide in the second stage of interview process – designing the interviews. The interview guide is divided into four main parts, which are Opening introduction and general questions, Warm-up questions, Main section and Ending questions. The detailed interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

- **Part 1: Opening Introduction and General questions.** In this part, we introduced our research purpose briefly in the beginning to let the interviewees know our intention and feel comfortable in the interview situation. Subsequently, we explained that the interview would be recorded and the respondents' names would be kept in anonymous, and then we got their confirmations and agreements to these conditions. Additionally, in order to establish the profiles of interviewees, we asked them a series of general questions, such as their age, gender, occupation and how much time they spend on social networking platforms.
- **Part 2: Warm-up Questions.** Questions in this part are designed for the purpose of knowing respondents' selling experiences related to social commerce. For instance, we opened with a question of whether the seller remembered the first time he/she ever sold something through social networking platforms and let them describe how it was. Moreover, we encouraged them to motivate how they made a decision to sell products on social networking platforms.
- **Part 3: Main section.** This part consists of the main interview questions focusing on each theme and potential factors that presented in our theoretical framework (see table 2.3), such as Rewards, Cost, Informational Support, Emotional Support, Trust, Commitment, Satisfaction, Information Sharing, Knowledge Sharing and Network.
- **Part 4: Ending questions.** This part includes the ending questions aiming to make a closure of the interview. In this part, we hope the interviewees could rank several top factors that they think are most important for them to engage in social commerce activities. Meanwhile, we asked for the respondents' general opinion about our research question, and to make sure if there is something else we were missing.

Since the interview guide of semi-structured type of interview should include an outline of topics with suggested questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), we based on our theoretical framework, generated the interview suggested questions by matching to each theme/ theory and concepts (See table 3.2). Additionally, we followed the principle of the interview questions should be easy to understand and short, and tried to avoid academic language.

Table 3.2: Overview of the Interview Questions

Theme (Theory)	Potential Factors	Suggested interview questions
Social Exchange Perspective (SET)	Rewards: opportunity, prestige, conformity, or acceptance (social aspect). Cost: rewards foregone (time and effort that could have been spent); painful or boring "work" performed.	• Q4: Have you ever sold your products or services in some other ways? • Q5: In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat for selling (in comparison to other ways)? • Q6: Do you find that usage of Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?
Social Support Perspective (SST)	Informational Support: providing messages, such as recommendations, advice, knowledge, or helpful for solving problems Emotional Support: caring, understanding, empathy	• Q7: Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buyers? • Q8: Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more? • Q9: What kind of notifications/ feedbacks do you get from the buyers after you inform them about the problem/trouble encountered?

Relationship Quality	Trust	• Q10: If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell? • Q11: How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?
	Commitment	• Q12: Do you feel a sense of belonging to Facebook/ VKontakte/ Wechat? How often do you use this kind of platform? • Q13: Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?
	Satisfaction	• Q14: How would you describe your feeling when selling things on Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat?
Sharing Behavior	Information/ knowledge Sharing	• Q15: Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, you share product's general description such as its color, size, etc. • Q16: Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding to the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold). • Q17: How often do you post/ share such kind of news/information/knowledge?

Connectivity	Network	• Q18: When you chose Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat for selling purposes, have you considered your network?
		  o If yes, in what way do you think your network (circle of friends) affect your selling activity?
		  o If no, does a group network play any role to you? In what way?
		• Q18: Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (That means from this activity, you have more friends)

Since the focus of our study is the factors which stimulate sellers to participate in social commerce, we used "what" and "how" questions, yet tried to avoid using "why" questions, which reasoned by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) that: when respondents answered the question of why, mostly they involved in their "self-understanding", which may influence the researchers' interpretation. Furthermore, we tried to formulate interview questions in a standard way in order to allow cross comparison in the stage of interview analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3.4.3 Interviewing

When conducting the third stage of interview process – interviewing, we started to select the appropriate interviewees, and followed by the live interviews via face-to-face interviews, video call by Skype and video call by WeChat, because some of our respondents are located outside of Sweden and social networking platforms chosen for this research are popular in different parts of the world.

Interviewees (Respondents) Selection. When we considered the selection of our interviewees, we found basically, there are two types of sellers in C2CSNP, the first type is the seller who already owned an online shop for their own business, they used social networking platforms just to post advertisements or post the photos of their products directly; the other type is the user conducted selling activities only when it is necessary, for example, these ones only sold their second-hand things when they do not need them.

Pilot-test Interview. In order to verify whether the interview questions asked is intelligible to the respondents (Bhattacherjee, 2012), we conducted our first interview as a pilot test. After the pilot-testing interview, we found our interview guide could be understood quite well. However, we realised that a seller with little selling experience on social networking platforms could not answer some of the interview questions. As the consideration of verifying our theoretical framework and hoping to explore more new factors, we decided to choose the interviewees with rich experiences on selling.

Table 3.3: Overview data collection of pilot testing

Interviewee						Interview	
Respond-ents	Platforms	Gen-der	Age	Occupation	Times of selling experience	Date (Duration)	Method
Pilot one	Facebook	Male	26-35	Student	One time	26th April, 2016 (19 min 52 sec)	Face-to-face

The live interview conduction. When conducting the live interviews, we tried to follow some principles as below:

Firstly, we want to make a good preparation for the interview. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) states that the better the preparation for an interview, the higher the quality of the knowledge produced in the interview procedure. So, for one thing, we wanted to become more familiar with the sellers' background and their selling experiences, especially their online stores if they have one and their on-selling products. The other thing is to ensure our recording successfully and with high quality, we decided to use sound record applications of two smart phones during the interview.

Secondly, in order to get the interviewee's voice, facial and bodily expressions accompanying the statement, which can provide a richer access to the respondents' meanings than the transcribed texts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), when we had two interviewers conduct one interview (only for the English speaking interviews), one interviewer was responsible to ask the questions, and hold the whole conversation; the other interviewer was responsible for the recoding equipment, and making a notes on important things.

Thirdly, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) recommended to consider more about analysis which will be done later on when conducting the interview, especially if the analysis involved coding the answers. During the interview the interviewers should continually clarify the meanings of the answers with respect to the categories or themes to be used later.

Finally, in order to verify the potential factors we summarized in literature review, we tried to promote a positive interaction during the whole interview. In addition to keep the flow of the

conversation going, we tried to stimulate the interviewee to talk more about their experiences and feelings. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Summary of the Interviewing. Finally, we finished our interviewing after conducting 10 interviews, as we found we have already gained the same opinions to each topic from the respondents. We also discovered that there were some new concepts named by the respondents. Since the selected social networking platforms are popular and used in different location with different languages, and the selected respondents are based on different platforms. So we conducted these 10 interviews in four different languages: English, Chinese Russian and Ukrainian. A general description of our interview respondents and an overview of the interviews are outlined below in table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Overview of interview data collection

Interviewees				Interviews		
Respond-ents	**Platforms**	**Gender**	**Times of selling experience**	**Date (Duration)**	**Method**	**Language**
RP1	VKontakte	Female	Multiple Times	28th April, 2016 (17 min 06 sec)	Skype Video Call	English
RP2	VKontakte	Female	Multiple Times	2nd May, 2016 (32 min 12 sec)	Skype Video Call	Russian
RP3	VKontakte	Male	Multiple Times	9th May, 2016 (34 min 24 sec)	Skype Video Call	Ukrainian
RP4	Facebook	Female	Several Times	27th April, 2016 (26 min 16 sec)	Skype Video Call	English
RP5	Facebook	Female	Several Times	1st May, 2016 (21 min 21 sec)	Skype Video Call	Russian
RP6	Facebook	Female	Several Times	27th April, 2016 (45 min 22 sec)	Skype Video Call	English
RP7	Facebook	Female	Several Times	28th April, 2016 (49 min 51 sec)	Skype Video Call	Russian
RP8	WeChat	Female	Multiple Times	28th April, 2016 (23 min 18 sec)	WeChat Video Call	Chinese
RP9	WeChat	Male	Multiple Times	28th April, 2016 (37 min 11 sec)	WeChat Video Call	Chinese
RP10	WeChat	Female	Several Times	5th May, 2016 (16 min 08 sec)	Face-to-face	Chinese

3.4.4 Transcribing

Transcribing, as the fourth stage of interview process, aims to transcribe from audio recording to written text, which can be used in the next stage. Although there is no universal form or code for transcription, there are still some standard choices that can be made, which depends on the intended use of the transcript (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 207). Since we aim to verify some factors which stimulate sellers to engage in social commerce, meantime, to find some new factors that are not included in the literature review, we decided to transcribe the interviews word by word, and including the "emphases in intonation", "overlaps" and "repeating words", which we thought could reflect their emphases and emotional feeling.

By considering that some of the interviews were conducted in Chinese Mandarin, Russian and Ukrainian, firstly we translated them into English, and got help from either relatives or friends who could provide proof-reading. Secondly, after we ensured that the translation was correct, we transcribed these interviews in the same way as English speaking interviews.

In order to keep the refresh memory in our mind, we transcribed the audio recordings and our hand notes as soon as possible, most of the transripts were translated and transcripted within three days. Once the transcribing has been done, we double-checked the quality and accuracy together. All the transcriptions can be found from Appendix 2 to Appendix 11 in a table format.

3.4.5 Analysing

Although the computer programs, such as Nvivo, can facilitate the analysis of interview transcripts, it cannot replace the task and the responsibilities of the researchers when it comes to the interpretation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). We conducted the fifth stage of interview process – analyzing by ourselves in the way of manual coding. Coding is considered as a fundamental analytic process for many types of qualitative research (Schreier, 2012). Since our purpose for data collection is to verify the potential factors that have been already found in our literature review and meantime to explore some new factors through the interviews, we combined with "Concept-driven coding" and "Data-driven coding" together, which is strongly recommended by Schreier (2012) and most frequently used when conducing qualitative content analysis.

Content-driven Coding. This category of coding can be based on theory, on prior research, on logic, on everyday knowledge, or on an interview guide (Schreier, 2012). In the first phase of coding, we collected and marked the codes based on our themes/ theories or concepts that presented in our theoretical framework.

Data-driven Coding. This approach is usually called open coding, which simply starts by reading texts and trying to tease out what is happening (Gibbs, 2008). In this phase, we tried our best to figure out the core concepts or factors which were not included in our theoretical framework, but based on our understanding or knowledge regarding the phenomenon of social commerce. Hence, to supplement our research with the new factors, which have not derived from the literature review.

During the coding stage, we also adopted the suggestion given by Porter, Bhattacharya, and van Teijlingen (2006) about conducting coding by two team members. The researches suggest that it is better to code the initial data separately then to compare, discuss and reach agreement on different meanings of these codes. So based on that, we outlined our coding into three phases.

Phase 1: Coding Separately. In order to make consistent to our codes marking, we followed the standard that using the same color markers for each concept. In such a manner, every time we have encountered a certain concept, we marked it with its color (see table 3.5). This enabled us to easily find a concept we needed. Then we coded the transcriptions separately.

Table 3.5: Coding Scheme

Concepts	Code	Color
Rewards	**RW**	Red
Cost	**CT**	Orange
Informational Support	**IST**	Light Green
Emotional Support	**EST**	Green
Trust	**TT**	Light Blue
Commitment	**CM**	Blue
Satisfaction	**SF**	Purple
Information Sharing	**IS**	Light Pink
Knowledge Sharing	**KS**	Pink
Networks	**NW**	Brown
New Concepts	**NC**	Yellow

Phase 2: Coding Review. In this phase, we sat together to review each other's coding for each transcription. In order to make an agreement for some uncertain issues or different opinions, sometimes we needed to listen to the recording again, or to find a third person, such as our supervisor, to gain his/ her advices or suggestions.

Phase 3: Coding Preparation for finding analysis. In order to present the finding more clearly, each time, we checked each concept in these 10 different transcriptions and meantime counted the total numbers of the concept has been mentioned in the interviews. The rule for counting the numbers is if one concept appeared multiple times when the respondents were answering the same question, we counted as once; otherwise, we counted as a new appearance. This counting was used in our findings analysis and discussion part.

3.5 Ensuring research quality

In order to ensure high quality in our research, we employed the traditional concepts of reliability, validity, bias and ethics to explain that what we have done is in line with our research process, especially the process of interviewing, i.e. the collection and analysis of the empirical data.

3.5.1 Reliability and Validity

The scientific discussion involving reliability and validity in qualitative research is not as straightforward as when it comes to quantitative research. Some argues that reliability is not relevant at all in qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001). Others point out that validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). However, in order to be able to prove scientific character of the research, it is important not to neglect these con-

cepts. So, Golafshani (2003) states that the researcher should ask herself or himself an important question of how to test or maximize the validity and as a result the reliability of a qualitative study. In order to ensure reliability and validity in our study, firstly we conducted a thorough literature review and generated a theoretical framework based on social-related theories and other related concepts, which was in line with the first phase of qualitative research interviewing process, named thematizing. Also for the purpose of avoiding possible misinterpretations, we used simplified language for our interview questions (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

Reliability of interview knowledge relates to the "consistency and trustworthiness of research findings, which was also treated as an issue of whether a finding is reproducible at other times and by other researchers" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 281); *Validity of interview knowledge* can be explained as "the truth, the correctness, and the strength of a statement in an ordinary language" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 282). According to the suggestion about the quality of qualitative research interviewing by (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), consideration of reliability and validity do not belong to a separate stage of an investigation, but should be involved in the whole process of interview. Thus, actions of avoiding issues of reliability and validity during interviewing, transcribing, and analyzing have been elaborated in the previous sections. For instance, we recorded the whole procedure of each interview and conducted pilot-testing interview to test our interview-guide; we transcribed by individuals and has a double-check together; in data analysis phase, we followed our coding process, which means that we firstly conducted coding separately, and then reviewed the coding together to achieve a consistent.

3.5.2 Bias

According to one of the definitions from Merriam-Webster (2016a) dictionary, bias is "systematic error introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others". Bias can influence the scientific validity of the research and therefore to set the researcher for a failure. That is why bias awareness is a factor that cannot be ignored when conducting scientific research.

For the purpose of assuring the scientific quality of our research, we identified potential biases and focused on avoiding them. Thereby, in order to avoid biased sampling (Bhattacherjee, 2012), we have chosen to focus on three social networking platforms, which are popular in various parts of the world. This allows us to include in this research respondents, who are not united by the same selling practices of a certain platform and who have different selling reasons and experiences. By such randomization of the respondent choice, we plan to achieve higher degree of objectivity.

In order to be able to stay *as objective as possible* when it comes to reducing biased interpretation of the results, we have followed suggestions provided by Recker (2012). Considering what is relevant for our case, we strived for our research procedures to be repeatable. We have carefully identified related concepts and theories and designed the interview guide in such a way that allows others outside of the research team to repeat our research and get similar results (Recker, 2012).

3.5.3 Ethics

Taking into considering that ethics is a moral distinction of what is right and wrong

(Bhattacherjee, 2012), it is not always easy to distinguish one from the other and therefore to ensure that research ethics was followed. Neglecting research ethics can lead to violation of the scientific principles of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In order to ensure research ethics, we have followed ethical principles defined by Bhattacherjee (2012) such as voluntary participation and harmlessness, confidentiality, disclosure, analysis and reporting.

Thus, all of our interviewees have been notified that their participation is voluntary and that they had right not to answer a particular question if they thought that the question was touching upon private issues. We asked for permission to record the interviews and to use obtained information for the research purposes. Also, we have promised our respondents confidentiality, which means that their identity would not be disclosed. At the same time, potential participants were provided with information regarding our research, so that they could choose whether to participate in the study or not. When it comes to analysis and reporting, we analysed all interview and disclosed even unexpected findings.

3.6 Methodology limitation

Due to the scope of this research and limited time, we identify three major limitations for our paper.

The variety of social networking platforms would make it impossible to conduct a research upon all of them. That is why we decide to limit our choice by three criteria such as leisure-oriented category of social networking platforms, affordances, popularity of these platforms as well as geographical distribution of their users. Relying on these criteria we limit our research to three social networking platforms as Facebook, VKontakte and WeChat.

Since we have conducted the interviews in four languages, English, Chinese Mandarin, Russian and Ukrainian, we are aware of the limitation that follows both translations and interpretation of the results. In order to diminish possible biases that are related to this issue, we have ensured proof-reading of the interview transcription. Also all the interview transcripts have been interpreted jointly.

The last limitation is connected to the culture background of the respondents. We admit that it has not been taken into consideration in our research, which may or may not influence interpretation of the interviews.

4 Empirical Findings

According to our theoretical framework (see table 2.3), we categorized the empirical findings into six different themes, which included different concepts (potential factors): *rewards, cost, informational support, emotional support, trust, commitment, satisfaction, information sharing, knowledge sharing and network.*

In the beginning of each findings section regarding a certain concepts, we selected the "best quotes", which can clearly express the respondents' viewpoints, and presented in tables. The selection of the "best quotes" was based on the suggestion by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), who described best quote as the most extensive, illuminating, and well-formulated statement.

Quoting of the interviews is referenced to the appendix by using the appendix number and the line number in the table of transcription. For example, a quotation referenced as *6:23* means that it is referenced to a statement presented in appendix 6, line 23.

4.1 SET (rewards and cost)

This section presents findings regarding concepts of *rewards* and *cost*. Rewards and cost in this context are tightly bound to economic and social aspects. The examples in the tables below are aimed to comprehensively cover all discussed social networking platforms.

4.1.1 Rewards

Large amount of respondents confirmed in their testimonies on three factors – *reputation* (see table 4.1), *saving money* (see table 4.2) and *saving time and effort* (see table 4.3).

Four respondents noted that feedback and reputation played significant role in their selling activity.

Table 4.1: Rewards - Reputation

RP2	RP5	RP9
Of course, the most important thing is to have a good reputation, this is critically. Because if you finished you deal with the person unfairly, this lies over your reputation. You should always be good (3:32).	I had a situation where I personally was more inclined to the buyer, who messaged second, but in order to preserve a good name and reputation, I have made an honest decision and sold to the one who first showed up (6:20).	I will sell the products who contacts me first or who paid money to me first. In my opinion, reputation is the most important for selling things. Even though the second or third coming buyers may pay more money, I will still sell the product to the first person who contacted me first or paid firstly, because we have already made a deal, I must follow my word (10:20).

RP1 pointed out that users left "thanks" (meaning positive feedbacks), which could be read by others (2:16). Such practice enabled to build trust between sellers and buyers and to establish seller's reputation. This respondent mentioned feedbacks two more times. The first time, was when giving arguments regarding why not to switch to another platform (2:30); while the second time is, when describing how friends affect the selling activity (2:42).

When answering the question that is related to amount of messages and notification received, RP2 said: "I work more honestly, I choose items myself, I judge what I want to sell what I don't. That's why I get good reviews" (3:10). This citation shows that reviews play essential role for the respondent as they reflect the way the respondent works with the clients and in such a manner helps to maintain the reputation. RP9 mentioned the reputation two more times (10:12; 10:30), which proves the importance of this factor.

When it comes to the topic of saving money, six respondents admitted the fact that possibilities to sell without any extra cost as well as avoidance of the investment were important for them.

Table 4.2: Rewards – Saving Money

RP2	RP4	RP10
You make a nice looking photo of an item but you don't buy it. You place a photo on a social network and person who wants to buy it has already pre-paid it. With that money you go and buy it and send it to the buyer by adding your share. You are not losing anything; image uploading is free on VK. Easy and uncomplicated. You are selling the service without any investment (3:8).	First [benefit] is the biggest, it is free. If you are posting something there it is free and you don't have any time limitations. On Blocket I think it is one month or something. Then you need to repost it again, you need to pay additional money. For example, if you are posting something on FB, you don't have to pay for the amount of pictures that you attach (5:22).	And it saved money, because it should cost money if you make a phone-call or send a message. But for WeChat, you don't need to pay money and it is very convenient, also it is easier to communicate with others (11:42).

RP3 said that one of the reasons, which has influenced him to make a decision to sell on VKontakte, was because it was "cheap" (4:6), meaning that it was free of charge. RP5 pointed out that selling on social networking platforms helped to avoid unnecessary cost in case if the initial price of the product was low (6:40). RP9 pointed out that the low cost was one of the things that motivated him to sell on WeChat (10:42).

All respondents, except for RP2 and RP7, confirmed that social networking platforms helped them to save time and put less effort into their selling activity.

Table 4.3: Rewards – Saving Time and Effort

RP2	RP6	RP8
It is that you can immediately find people, who are interested in your items (4:10).	Yes, it does [help to save time and effort], because on Facebook, you saved your time talk to people on the phone. Because people are there, whenever you have time, you go and check your Facebook, the page where you posted your con-	Of course, greatly helped me to save time and put less efforts. Especially for the buyers from other cities, they bought the products in my physical store for the first time, and when they want to buy again, they just used WeChat

Effort, yes. It is much easier than to create own site, it is much easier to keep life in those groups, than to create and maintain site somehow separately. Much easier (4:12).	versation. Once you decided with whom, you can comment on that and have a private email to chat with that person, then exchange phone numbers and address, this is the best thing I think (7:22).	to inform me and we can complete the transaction activity online. It saves my time a lot and the buyer's time, and saved the time for conversation in my store (9:12).

RP4 admitted that it was "faster to make selling ad" (5:24). RP5 recognized that she saved time and effort through targeting the audience (6:12). While respondents RP9 and RP10 only admitted that WeChat helped them to save time and effort without further elaboration on the topic.

At the same time, it was possible to define smaller topics that were relevant only to some of the respondents. RP2 and RP3 have admitted the positive effect of maintaining friendship with their buyers (3:26; 4:36). For that reason, we included these findings into a separate concept called companionship.

The possibility to choose among buyers was pointed out by RP5 (6:10) and RP6 (7:14) and has been defined as *alternative*.

Another rewards-related topic we found was defined as opportunity. It means that the selling-examples of other users influenced the respondents to sell on social networking platforms. This has been confirmed by the following respondents: RP1 (2:46), RP4 (5:12), RP6 (7:42).

Also the possibility to visualize buyer was mentioned to be helpful by RP4 (5:64), RP5 (6:10) and RP6 (7:20). Therefore, we defined it as *visualization*.

4.1.2 Cost

Our findings showed that four out of ten respondents did not mentioned any *costs* related issues when answering the questions, while six others chose to bring up those concerns that they had.

We also discovered that *cost* was greatly various depending on both personality of the respondent and the platform itself. Two of the VKontakte respondents pointed out the issue of wasting time and energy when answering various questions (see table 4.4), which did not always lead to sales.

Table 4.4: Cost – Wasting Time

RP2	RP3
Right now I have 840 unopened messages on VK. Each day I get at least 20 new messages. But you understand but the half of them are… One wrote to me in March 2013, asked many-many questions and then disappeared, after 4 days of conversation. Then, she writes to me in 2014 – about same item, many-many questions. Then again, in 2015, I spend my time and energy on her. Now she writes to me again but I don't want to answer because it's a waste of energy and time (3:10).	Many people just ask questions, they pump for information about the product. You need to explain, talk… communicate. Sometimes there is no time, but there are 5 messages a day, and it is very difficult. We were chatting and it took an hour or even 2, and then the next day even more talks (4:28). But there are those who ask about trip to Sweden, how to reach there and so on. Well, such things. It did not stimulate me additionally… It didn't increase my income (4:30).

Meanwhile two of WeChat respondents noted that there was an issue related to WeChat functionality, which resulted in user's selling information being shared to the friends' for whom it is irrelevant (see table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Cost – Spreading of irrelevant information

RP8	RP9
In the beginning, when I used WeChat to post the information about the products, I only considered about my circle of friends and relatives. But after I have done these kind of selling things for a long time, I found my network was expanding, then I considered that I should create a specific account only for selling. But now I cannot modify the account, but considering a long-term plan, I have to create a new account that focuses on only selling and provides information for the customers. Because I have lots of friends and relatives who will feel boring about so many information about the products (9:34).	[…] there are some of my friends in my previous circle who are not interested in the products and can feel bored and annoyed (10:38).

Some other cost factors were mentioned by the respondents, such as lack of time for answering and a need to establish reputation (2:14; 2:16); security (9:24); difficulty to extend network (10:28), reliance on friends in terms of sharing (10:28), promoting issues (10:28); and limited public in terms of being used mainly by one nation (11:26).

4.2 SST

4.2.1 Informational Support

Table 4.6: Informational Support

RP4	RP8	RP9	RP10
Yea, I think so [receive enough messages or notifications]. One more benefit of Facebook, [is] you have a chat conversation (5:26).	They gave me a lot suggestions and reminding. It's very benefit to me (9:14).	Yes [receive enough messages or notifications], it's very fast as WeChat is a kind of instant message tool (10:16).	Yes [receive enough messages or notifications]. It's instant and in time (11:14).

When considering informational support as providing enough messages or notifications, in terms of recommendations, advices and suggestions, 9 of 10 respondents totally agreed with it, except of one respondent (RP7) who did not answer this question directly. They considered informational support as a usual benefit of using social network platform. It means that informational support, especially messaging support, is one of the main functionalities of social networking platforms (5:26, 9:14, 10:16, 11:14). Since WeChat is originally an instant messaging tool, for the sellers who used WeChat to conduct social commerce activities, informational support helps them to get the messages from buyers quickly, hence to save the seller's time and let them feel more convenient (10:16, 11:14).

4.2.2 Emotional Support

Table 4.7: Emotional Support

RP4	RP5	RP9
I am sure that if I needed to say to buyer about some changes in the circumstances, the buyers would be pretty nice to me. They have always been nice (5:32).	Where there is emotional component, it is more important to see to whom you are selling (6:28).	Yes, it often happened. Since there are a lot of things we cannot control, so if I delayed sending products for one or two days, the buyers can understand me. However, when the buyers hoped to receive the products as soon as possible, I can also understand them (10:18).

In order to verify if emotional support, as a factor, could stimulate the respondents to conduct selling activity, when asking the interview question, we tried to create a situation. This situation was based on an assumption which emerged when sellers encountered some problems or troubles, aiming to confirm if they got enough understanding or encouragement from buyers. Each of the respondents agreed with it and expressed that they could get enough understanding and sometimes even encouragement from buyers. They also expressed that buyers were always very nice and good (3:12, 5:32), and they could even get confidence through the emotional support from buyers (3:24). Moreover, not only the emotional support from buyers to sellers, could stimulate sellers to engage in selling activity, but also the one from sellers to buyers, could promote the online transaction. It means that the emotional support from sellers could attract more and more buyers to conduct buying activities (10:18).

4.3 Relationship Quality

4.3.1 Trust

Table 4.8: Trust

RP2	RP6	RP8	RP9
A year ago I made an album with comments and suggestions. Now it has approximately 160 reviews. It's not a lot but it helps people who are not sure [to trust me]. Trust in me, as a seller is very important (3:10).	It just feels that I have to trust person, then I definitely go to their profile, I want to check with this person (7:30).	I have one selling experience on Taobao, but I don't like Taobao, because there are so many fake things in Taobao, so I still want to use WeChat, especially used the functionality of "Circle of Friends" [to sell things] (9:8).	It totally depends on the trust between buyers and sellers (10:6). For the communication between human beings, trustworthiness is the first place for me, the disputes seldom happened to me, but it cannot avoid dispute on any platform (10:44). By using WeChat, it totally depends on the individual's trustworthiness and the communication between human beings (10:44).

Trust is a very important factor in social commerce, which has been mentioned 29 times in these 10 interviews. Since our research focuses on the seller's perspective, trust, in this context, generally refers to how sellers trust buyers, such as sellers normally tended to verify buyers' trust through checking and reviewing their profiles (5:38, 5:40, 7:30). However, if buyers paid money first and then sellers delivered products, buyers should take more consideration on trust than sellers (2:48, 9:18, 10:12); or if they conducted transaction face-to-face, they often did not consider trust as a big deal (11:22). RP2 mentioned that informational support, such as providing albums, could increase buyers' trust to sellers (3:10). For the experienced or professional sellers, it's critical to earn trustworthiness when conducting social commerce (10:44).

Additionally, this concept also refers that the users (both sellers and buyers) trust the social networking platforms. For example, both RP8 and RP9 mentioned that there were lots of fake things selling on Taobao (a Chinese C2C website for online shopping), compared with WeChat. So users preferred using WeChat to conduct social commerce by considering the trust towards this platform (9:8, 10:44).

4.3.2 Commitment

Table 4.9: Commitment

RP1	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	RP7	RP8	RP9	RP10
	De-pendent (3:20)	De-pendent (4:24)		X	X		Always online (9:22)	Strong Rely on (10:24)	Check every day (11:24)

When we turned this concept into our specific interview questions, we tried to verify if the respondents felt a sense of belonging to the specific platform they were using, or if they have considered about changing to another platform. Only two (RP5, RP6) of them admitted that they felt a sense of belonging to the platform, but most of the sellers thought they were not belonging to the platform, but felt more dependent on or reliance on such specific platform they used for selling (3:20, 4:24, 10:24). For the experienced or professional sellers who have their own business, they just expressed that it was necessary and important to be online and check messages frequently, in order to avoid missing the transaction opportunities (9:22, 11:24).

4.3.3 Satisfaction

Table 4.10: Satisfaction

RP2	RP6	RP7
You establish good relationships with everyone, somehow friendly relations (3:26).	I was really happy because the selling was so fast. I was impressed (7:12). So we were very happy with this solution and anytime I will be selling again, I will definitely first	The most satisfaction is when someone is happy (8:30).

	go through Facebook, and find these groups of course (7:14).	

When respondents described their general feelings for the selling experience on social networking platforms, each of them expressed their happiness, enjoyment and satisfaction, especially for the ones who remembered their first time selling experience, they even felt very impressed with the fast transaction (4:28, 7:12). A good relationship between buyers and sellers is also a factor increasing the seller's satisfaction on the selling experience, in terms of if buyers feel happy, sellers are also happy (3:26, 8:30).

4.4 Information Sharing

Table 4.11: Information Sharing

RP1	RP5	RP6
Information sharing is the main factor in selling. People want to choose the right size, colour and model. It is the main [most important] thing for them (2:34). I can share the information even without having a product. I use information sharing more often than knowledge sharing (2:38).	Yes, it helps. I see a direct link to the result. The exchange of information has a direct impact on the success of the event [selling] (6:30). Yes, it is needed. If a person [seller] describes a product well, a buyer will contact him/ her faster (6:30).	Yeah, definitely. Especially on information sharing level (7:34). So on that level, I really-really like when people give me enough, more information of whatever the condition of the product is, so that you are aware, and not see actually and not very disappointed (7:34).

Among 8 of 10 respondents admitted that information sharing was very important and the main factor driving their selling activity, but two respondents (RP3, RP4) thought that it did not drive their selling. For the experienced or professional sellers, they preferred to share new information in terms of products' size, colour, etc., as soon as they got new products or new information (9:32, 10:36). For the sellers who had not so much selling experience, as they mostly sold second-hand things, they preferred to share their products' information as detailed as possible, hence to let buyers know more about it, and then to facilitate the transactions (7:34).

4.5 Knowledge Sharing

Table 4.12: Knowledge Sharing

RP5	RP6	RP7	RP8	RP10
Yes, definitely. The more complex the product is, the more important it is to share the experience (6:32).	Yeah, exactly, it didn't really happen in my case, but I see that if someone is selling a more complicated product, let's say, a complicated device	Knowledge sharing is very good on FB because I am subscribed to all the masters. There is a closed group where the girls are answering questions hon-	Yes, there should be support and it's very important. I posted the knowledge related to my products, for example, how to use it (9:30).	Yes. It is a part of and it is very good. I think the most important things drive me to use WeChat for selling is because it is very convenient and it

	that people don't really know how to use it, then people can actually explain to you how to use it, how differences from other devices, then I also feel more content with that, so now I understand the person is actually sharing an experience that how to actually use this product, it should make you want to buy it (7:36).	estly. They go to master-class which costs a lot of money, they share photos and videos from there. And explain how this is done. So I can get it for free. If I would be wise I would use it (8:34).		supports knowledge sharing (11:34).

In the context of social commerce, when considering knowledge sharing as sharing the experience or expertise regarding products, 8 of 10 respondents agreed that knowledge sharing played an important role, especially for the experienced/ professional sellers (9:30, 10:30), or the sellers who sold some complicated devices or tools (6:32, 7:36). Although there are two respondents (RP3, RP4) who thought that knowledge sharing has not driven their selling activities, they still admitted that it happened when conducting social commerce activity.

The three respondents, who used WeChat as their social commerce platform, emphasized that knowledge sharing was a key factor to facilitate their transaction. They benefited from a functionality named "personal public account" on WeChat. Through creating this public account and posting knowledge to their followers, it greatly helped sellers to promote their reputation and acquired more buyers (10:30).

4.6 Network

When it comes to *network,* the users mentioned two main ideas, both of which proved the importance of this concept. The first one focuses on the role of a seller's own network in the selling activity. The findings of the idea are presented in table 4.13. Meanwhile the second idea relates to the network of a platform in general or to the network of the various groups that are designed for selling activities and presented in table 4.14.

Table 4.13: The role of own network

RP1	RP7	RP9
They leave feedbacks, they tell their friends, other people can see the products they have bought at my shop [page VK]. They share the information and invite new friends (2:42).	On FB I, probably, have the biggest friend list. I have around 447-450 people, friend, half friend, acquaintances, teachers on FB. So there is an information pool, I show [photo] to min 450 people depending on who of them used and could see it. They can also tell to someone else (8:14). Primarily [consider] – friends circle.	As you know, in the beginning, the main function you used WeChat is to contact with your friends, relatives and classmates […], we can add friends on WeChat. So the prerequisite for choosing WeChat is that the customers acquisition is stable, and we know the potential customers, that's the first reason I used WeChat (10:8).

	They share, they make orders (8:38).	[…] it depends a lot on your own friends, as your friends need to help you to recommend or forward the product's information, they need to help you to send to their friends […] (10:28)

Respondents as RP2 (3:32) and RP8 (9:6; 9:10) also pointed out the significant role of the own network.

Table 4.14: Group/ Platform network

RP3	RP4	RP9
In such case it would be if in Ukraine FB was used in the same way as in Sweden for selling things. Maybe, they don't have VK, I don't know. If we had more people who moved to FB, more users, more actively and there were sale groups, of course, I'd put more effort into FB (4:26).	I checked once when entering the group. I looked at the posts if people were buying there or not, if it is active or not. Of course, if the group is empty and no one is buying anything, then there is no meaning to post anything there (5:58).	It depends on the numbers of users of other platforms, if there are a lot people using other platforms, like WeChat now, if nearly everyone use one social network, I have to change to this platform (10:26).

The respondents RP5 (6:36) and RP6 (7:38) admitted that they had been taking to account the network of the groups or the city they lived in.

4.7 New concepts

4.7.1 Target audience

Seven respondents pointed out the significance of targeting the audience in one or another way. Two of the respondents, RP4 and RP5, described it as the main reason for them to choose social networking platforms for selling purposes. That is why we have identified it as a separate concept, which is called Target audience and presented table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Target Audience

RP3	RP4	RP5
It was quite effective, the selling in VK, because I found, I joined groups of berry gatherers and I was proposing my berry combs just to them. It was rather good actually through VK (4:8). It is that you can immediately find people, who are interested in your items (4:10).	It is a target audience I guess. Mostly that it is easier to find buyer on Facebook then on Blocket (5:64).	What I'm selling I still sell here and there. I did not switch to FB completely with sales. On FB I sell either specific product for which the target audience I see it in the FB, I already know where to look for […]. The first reason, the ability to find the target audience for specific things (6:40).

Other respondents mentioned this concept as following: RP2 (3:4; 3:6), RP6 (7:14), RP7 (8:12). It is important to point out that none of the WeChat respondents has referred to this concept.

4.7.2 Usability

Another factor is related to the features of the platforms. That is why we named it Usability and presented in table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Usability

RP2	RP5	RP9
First of all, it is very easy to upload a picture and its description. A person may comment, may share, may issue a purchase order, makes an album at his page and sends me the link so I know what to buy and from whom (3:6).	[…]it is also one of the advantages of selling through a social network since now almost everyone platform has chat attached, and and so when circumstances change, you can quickly adjust (6:18).	Additionally, there are a lot of functionalities on WeChat, including chatting group, and then my friends helped me to recommend my products to their friends, so that their friends can buy things from me […]. So it is very fast and easy to be used (10:8).

This concept was also mentioned by other respondents such as RP1 (2;10), RP2 (3:52) and RP7 (8:42). Although our findings prove the importance of this concept when it comes to choosing a social platform for selling purposes, we will not discuss it further due to its relation to technological aspect, which is not the focus of our research.

4.7.3 Convenience

Six respondents mentioned that it was convenient for them to use social networking platforms for selling purposes. That is why, *convenience* was defined as a separate concept.

Table 4.17: Convenience

RP1	RP4	RP10
I began to sell in VK because it is easier, I ordered different clothes for my baby in VK. It was a good very good for me, convenient. So I thought that I could do it myself. These examples motivated me to sell things in VK (2:46).	On FB it is kind of more convenient. You immediately see who is writing you, which people are writing you via FB because you can see their profiles. You can see if they are available, where they live approximately something like that. On Blocket everything is anonymous (5:24).	I think the most important things that drive me to use WeChat for selling is because it is very convenient and it supports knowledge sharing (11:34).

The responses of other respondents can be found as following RP2 (3:34), RP8 (9:24), RP9 (10:42).

4.7.4 Other Concepts

We have also considered such concepts that had been mentioned only few times, which are shown in table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Minor Concepts

Familiarity	Popularity	Privacy	Security
RP1 (2:6; 2:30), RP6 (7:16)	RP2 (3:6), RP3 (3:26)	RP10 (11:30)	RP8 (9:24; 9:26)

Although our findings prove the importance of this concept when it comes to choosing a social platform for selling purposes, we will not discuss it further due to its relation to technological aspect, which is not the focus of our research.

5 Analysis and discussion

5.1 SET (rewards and cost)

According to our findings, *rewards*-related factors are among the most significant ones when it comes to C2C social commerce conducted on social networking platforms. While considering about this, it is important to point out that both of SET's concepts, *rewards* and *cost*, are based on two aspects – economic and social (McDonell, Strom-Gottfried, Burton, & Yaffe, 2006). Therefore, the identified *rewards* and *cost* factors can be classified into two groups as consistent with the SET aspects. When it comes to *rewards*, the economic factors include *saving money*, while the social aspect includes *reputation*, *companionship*, *opportunity* and *alternative*. The *cost* factor matching social aspect is *wasting time*, because of the wasting of unnecessary social communication associated with it (see table 4.4).

Also, there are factors that can belong to any of the aspects. The findings suggest that saving time and effort in rewards may be seen as related to economic, social or even technological aspect, which is not even part of SET. For example, the possibility to find buyers "immediately" (4:10), according to RP3, can be included to economic aspect, since saving time can be interpreted as saving money. Other respondent notion that it is "easier to keep life in those groups" (4:12). It underlines the importance of the social aspect. One of the respondents state that "it is much easier than to create own site" (4:12), which refers to the technological aspect. Furthermore, cost-related factor such as spreading of irrelevant information is also on the edge between social and technological aspects. The respondents RP8 and RP9 state that too much social commerce activity shown for the friends was diminishing personal touch in the flow of updates. At the same moment, it is a technological feature, which cannot be resolved unless WeChat changes its policy regarding its functionalities.

These examples prove that economic, social and technological aspects are bound together. Despite of the fact that the primary focus of our research is to study the social aspect, it is not always possible to distinguish between these three.
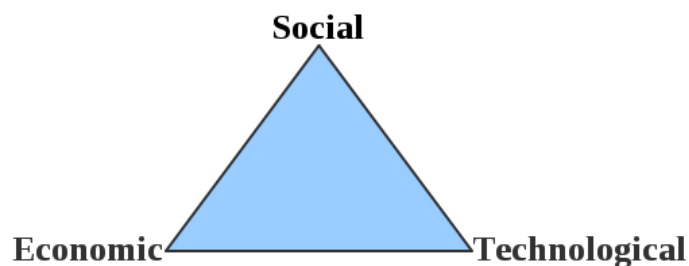
Figure 5.1: Three Aspects For Social Commerce

5.2 Social Support and Information Sharing

As mentioned in the theory part, social support includes informational support and emotional support, which have been illustrated in the empirical data as a benefit or natural functionality of social networking platforms (5:26, 9:14, 10:16, 11:14). It implies that social support is easier to be achieved and maintained on social networking platforms, with the supportive features, such as instant messages, ratings and recommendations. Therefore, the supportive situation makes the users feel more comfortable and convenient.

Information sharing has been considered as a source of social support, as either informational support or emotional support relies on providing messages, in terms of informational concerns or emotional concerns. So when social support, in the form of messages, was transferred by sellers and buyers, it turned to be natural on sharing commercial information and recommendations as an extension of sharing other supportive information, which could further facilitate the intention to conduct social commerce activities (Liang et al., 2011).

By considering the significant affection of social support and information sharing on social commerce, we generate a visualization showing the relation between them (see figure 5.2). This figure presents that social networking platforms provide the functionalities or benefits in forms of information sharing and social support (informational support and emotional support). Information sharing as a source provides the opportunity of sharing the supportive messages among users. Meanwhile, both information sharing and social support could facilitate or promote the transaction activities on social commerce. That illustrates the concept of information sharing and the theory of social support, as the main factors, are significantly influencing the sellers to engage in C2C commercial activities on these social networking platforms.
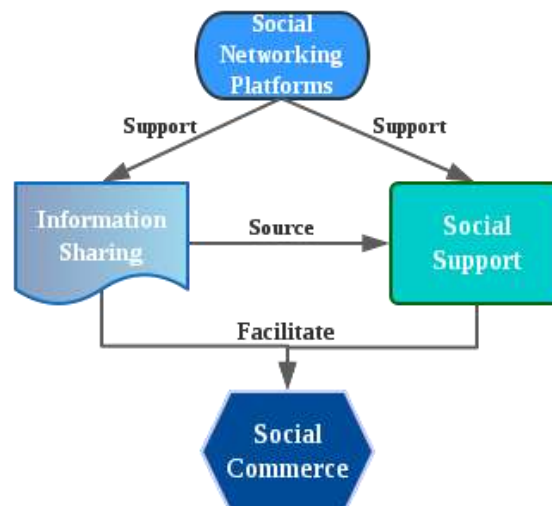
Figure 5.2: The relation between Social Support and Information Sharing

5.3 Relationship Quality

Although trust has been considered as one of the major components of relationship quality, it can be derived and named as a central concept affecting user's commercial activities on social networking platforms. For sellers, the concepts of commitment and satisfaction are more referred to the targeting on platforms, as the commitment or satisfaction between sellers and buyers is mostly included in the consideration of trust.

5.3.1 Trust

There are two aspects mentioned about trust in our empirical findings, one aspect is the trust between sellers and buyers, the other one is the seller's trust on the platforms for social commerce. For the trust between participants on social commerce, they preferred to check and review other one's profile or album to check their trust (5:38, 5:40, 7:30), which are transparent on social networking platforms, especially on Facebook and VKontakte. We also notice from the findings that users have more trust on the social networking platforms as they found more safety and almost no fake things if compared to other online transaction websites (9:8, 10:44).

On the other hand, trust has close relation to other factors, such as rewards, cost, information sharing and social support that have been mentioned before. As stated in our theoretical section, high trust is the essential to earn more rewards or low cost (Dwyer et al., 2007); meanwhile trust is considered as a critical deriving value obtained from social support, which means both informational support and emotional support could increase trust from online members. Therefore, trust in one of the most significant factors stimulating online users to engage in the commercial activities on social networking platforms. So it is possible to generate a visualization reflecting the important role of trust. In figure 5.3, the arrow means that the object in the beginning of the arrow can generate or increase the object in the end of the arrow, for instance, the arrow from social support and trust refers to social support can increase trust, and trust can increase rewards.
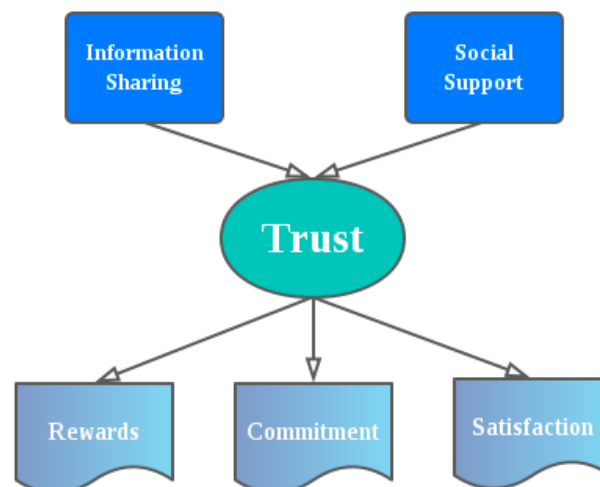
Figure 5.3: The relation between trust and other factors

5.3.2 Commitment and Satisfaction

The commitment and satisfaction of online users are totally based on their trust to each other. Having and maintaining a good trust relationship means that the users would like to continue their online transaction activities with trusted people and feel happy with each other.

Commitment to platforms. Seller's commitment to social networking platforms regarding the consideration of social commerce, is more reflected by their reliance on these platforms in terms of always being online and frequently refreshing their notifications from buyers. Our empirical findings indicate that the seller's commitment to social commerce platforms is driven by the consideration of economic aspect, which means they want to earn more transaction opportunities (9:22, 11:24).

Satisfaction to platforms. Satisfaction of sellers refers to the degree of their happiness on the communication with buyers, and the degree of their pleasure with the social commerce activities on these social networking platforms. From the empirical findings, we found that the seller's satisfaction with buyers was mainly brought from the buyer's social support and the buyer's satisfaction with the overall transaction procedures. On the other hand, the seller' satisfaction with those platforms is mainly based on the fast speed of transaction of information spreading on social networking platforms.

5.3.3 Relationship Quality and Social Support

In summary, social support increase/ promote the relationship quality, in terms of based on trust, the participants on social commerce feel commitment and satisfaction both to each other and to platforms. Previous literature also illustrates that "Social support can increase commitment, trust and satisfaction leading to improved customer loyalty. Improving relationship quality through trust, commitment, and satisfaction influences social commerce intention and makes social networking sites a valuable place for businesses." (M. N. Hajli, 2014a, p. 25). So relationship quality, in terms of trust, commitment and satisfaction, either to individual online members or to the social networking platforms, plays an important mediating role between social support and the outcome of social commerce.

5.4 Knowledge Sharing

We notice from the findings that, in the context of social commerce, whether knowledge sharing is a key factor or not totally depends on two preconditions. One is the attribute of the selling products; the other is if the social networking platforms support the function of knowledge sharing. So we present two patterns to explain in what situation knowledge sharing plays an important role in stimulating sellers to engage in commercial activities on social networking platforms.

For one thing, if the selling product contains a complicated functionality, which means it should be with some knowledge to use it, then knowledge sharing becomes important on selling these products. It also implies that sellers tend to share their expertise or experience for the reason of buyer's buying intention would be driven by their interest or curiosity to such knowledge (6:32, 7:36).

For another, if the social networking platforms could provide more chances or functionalities supporting users to share knowledge, then it also works in such situation. For instance, sharing knowledge through creating a "personal public account" is a very popular way when using WeChat. We found from the empirical data that one of the respondents (RP9) mentioned that creating such a public account is a very good new functionality of WeChat, and normally sellers who hold these accounts are not selling products directly, but through sharing related knowledge or creating forums, to gain more following potential buyers and to achieve good reputation (10:30), hence to achieve the goal of commercial activities. It also proves what have been mentioned in our literature review, which states that when sellers engage in the behaviors of knowledge sharing on a social commerce platform, they tend to pay more attention to attract fans and put more effort to become opinion leader (Yang et al., 2016), hence to attract more and more potential buyers.

5.5 Network

In general, according to the findings about *network* proves to be the principal factor for many respondents. Although usage of social networking platforms is highly integrated with the concept of network building, not all sellers consider their own friend circles when it comes to C2CSNP. Our findings show that four out of ten respondents, RP3, RP4, RP5, RP6, have not taken to consideration their own network. Partly it is caused by the nature of the product and partly by the fact that there are particular group specifically targeting potential users of these products as well as bigger audience in general. Also, the size of the audience decides whether the seller stays on the "initial" platform or will consider changing to some other social networking site where the potential target audience has proved to be bigger (4:26; 10:26). This indicates that social commerce often goes beyond the borders of traditional social networking activity, i.e. network building.

However, when it comes to WeChat, the own network is crucial for a seller. Their primary selling audience has been limited into their own network, which called "Circle of Friends" of WeChat. They can only share the selling information to their "friends" who have been in the Friends List. A popular way they can expand their network is to create a "Personal Public Account". By doing that, sellers could share their information to their followers hence to establish and expand their targeting audience.

5.6 New factors

Our findings reveal that there are some new factors, which are not derived from the initial framework, but are named by the respondents themselves. The new factors appeared to be as important for the respondents as concept-based. Among seven of these factors, there are three, which have been pointed out by the greater half of the respondents, and to those factors belong *target audience*, *usability* and *convenience*.

The possibility to directly target buyers that are potentially interested in a product happened to be a key factor for some respondents. This ability made it possible to save time looking for the customers and to speed up the selling process (see table 4.15). Respondents perceive this factor as a benefit that stimulates them to sell on social networking platforms. *Target audience* can be classified as a *rewards*-based social factor since establishment of any groups as

well as participation in them is a social process. However, the fact that it helps to save time might be perceived as economic aspect, while possibility to easily create and make announcements in groups can belong to technical aspect. For that reason, we decide to keep this factor separately so that the future research can provide answers and bring light into this area.

The *usability* factor is also appeared to be significant for the respondents. This factor is related to the features of the platform, which makes it clearly a technological aspect. Although we did not aim to focus on this aspect, the majority of the respondents emphasized it as a benefit.

Convenience is a third factor, which was named by the majority of the respondents. We classify this factor as the one, which belongs to the technological aspect. This is because this factor is often associated with the particular functionality.

We classify four minor factors as following. *Familiarity, security* are technological factors; *popularity* is social factor; and *privacy* can be seen as both social and technological factor. Privacy is classified as factor that belongs to social aspect due to the fact that one of the respondents did not want some of her friends to see certain posting (11:30). However, this is dictated by the platform specificity and can be seen as technological aspect. Further studies will reveal whether this factor belongs to social or technological aspect as well as its role to the seller when it comes to C2CSNP.

5.7 Unintentional selling behaviour

From the empirical findings, we found that two respondents expressed that their fist-time selling experience was unintentional, which means they just posted some pictures or messages on the social networking platforms only aiming to socialization, but unexpectedly received the buying requirements from potential buyers (8:6; 9:6). That indicates that in the beginning some of the users used these platforms as the purpose of communication, self presence, knowledge sharing, idea exchange, conversation and collaboration (Almeida et al., 2009), they haven't thought about selling things to others, yet it stimulated the potential buyer's interest to these posting things. It also illustrates that our theories selection from "social-aspect" is quite fit with the study in the context of C2CSNP.

5.8 Enriched research framework (include new findings)

In the table below we present factors that stimulate users (sellers) to engage in C2C social commerce on social networking platforms. This enriched framework includes three aspects such as economic, social and technological, which are presented in the first column. These aspects are included since the empirical findings show that they are important to the respondents, even though the emphasis of our research has been on the social aspect. The second column presents key factors, i.e. both factors that are included in the original theoretical framework and those that have been pointed out by the respondents spontaneously. The third column, supporting factors, includes the actual content of the key factors in one or the other way. There are also occasions when a certain supportive factor belongs to several key factors. This happens because the same supportive factor has been perceived in a different way by the respondents.

We realise that some of the key factors are more important than the others. However, in this research we have not aimed to arrange them in the priority order. For that reason, these factors are presented in the order of appearance.

Table 5.1: Enriched Research Framework

Theme	Factors	
	Key Factors	**Supporting Factors derived from Empirical Study**
Economic	Economic Rewards	✓ Save money ✓ Save time/ effort
Social	Social Rewards	✓ Reputation ✓ Opportunity ✓ Companionship ✓ Alternative ✓ Visualization ✓ Save time/ effort
	Cost	✓ Waste of time ✓ Irrelevant information
	Informational Support	✓ Messages support ✓ Recommendations, advices and suggestions
	Emotional Support	✓ Understanding or encouragement ✓ Confidence
	Trust	✓ Seller to Platforms ✓ Seller to buyer ✓ Buyer to seller
	Commitment	✓ Dependent on or Reliance on platforms
	Satisfaction	✓ Happiness ✓ Enjoyment
	Information Sharing	✓ Products general information sharing
	Knowledge Sharing	✓ Complicated Products ✓ Functionality of KS exists on platforms
	Network	✓ Own/ group/ platform network
	Target Audience (New)	✓ Selling group ✓ The same country/ language
	Popularity (New)	✓ Popularity of the platform
Technological	Usability (New)	✓ Features ✓ Save time/ effort
	Convenience (New)	✓ Functionality ✓ Familiarity (New)
	Security (New)	✓ Privacy (New)

6 Conclusions and future research

6.1 Research question and purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that stimulate users (sellers) of social networking platforms to engage in social commerce on those platforms. In order to fulfill this goal, we generated an initial theoretical framework by reviewing and analyzing literature that was related to social commerce. Through the empirical investigation and data analysis, the original theoretical framework was verified. Also, this framework was enriched by the new findings.

6.2 Main findings and contribution

In this study, we propose a research framework (see table 5.1), which is based on literature review and enriched by the empirical findings. This framework covers three aspects: economic aspect, technological aspect and social aspect. We include all these aspects due to the fact that some of our respondents have mentioned the factors that relate to economic and technological area. Our findings illustrate that the factors of social aspect have greatly facilitated the social commerce activity in the context of C2CSNP. These social factors, such as social support and social exchange, have been rarely covered or provided by the studies related to social commerce phenomenon. This could shed light on social commerce in the context of C2C.

When it comes to economic aspect and technological aspect, our empirical findings show that some factors, such as convenience, security, privacy and usability, play an important role in stimulating the sellers to engage in social commerce on social networking platforms. Although these factors were not included in our initial theoretical framework due to the delimitation of this research, these findings could be used in the future practice on the development of social commerce.

Moreover, the greatest contribution of this study is the comprehensive framework including the key social factors, which has not been investigated in the previous literature on C2C social commerce from individual seller's perspective. In our research framework (see table 5.1), it not only presents what are the key social factors, but also outlines the supporting factors derived from empirical findings. This highlights the significant implications for the owners of the e-commerce platforms, who might need to switch their e-commerce platforms to social commerce platforms. This consideration of the social factors that are established in our study will greatly aid them to acquire more and more users conducting C2C social commerce.

6.3 Future research

This research could be a critical foundation for the future research that aims to investigate how and why those social factors stimulate users to engage in social commerce activities. In our study, not only the factors of social aspect have been established and verified, but also some relations between these factors have been found. For instance, the relation with Information Sharing and Social Support (see figure 5.2); how Trust as a central factor relate to other factors (see figure 5.3) and Social Support can increase the Relationship Quality. These relations could be further investigated by a quantitative research in the future, in terms of, on which degree the factors impact each other. Moreover, some new factors included in our enriched framework provide implications and foundations for different research on the user's intention to engage in social commerce.

Since online users play a significant role in shaping the social commerce phenomenon, our enriched framework could be a useful reference for the e-commerce or social commerce platform owners to have a user-friendly design for meeting online users' needs.

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Opening Introduction

We are Alla Volkovynska and Ning Bao, who work together on Master thesis at Lund University. The purpose of our research is to identify what influence users to sell things on such social networking platforms as Facebook, VKontakte and WeChat. The interview will be recorded, however, the interviewees will be kept anonymously. The information obtained from the interview will be used for our Master thesis and perhaps be published on Lund University library page. When you make a decision to participate in the interview, you agree to these conditions. However, if you feel that you do not want to answer to any of our question, let us know, so we can skip it.

General Questions:

1. Do you agree to our conditions?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your age group:
    21-25
    26-35
    36-45
    46-55
    56-65
    66 or older
4. Are you currently working or studying? What kind of job/ education is it?
5. Do you use any of social networks? What kind of platform do you use for social interaction?
6. How much time do you use to spend on these platforms?

Part 1 – Warm-up Questions:

1. Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times?

    o If Yes, Which platform did you use?
    o If No, Would you consider to use (the platforms which they mentioned) for selling purposes? (The interview stops at this point).

2. Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat?

3. How did you make a decision to sell things on Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat? Can you describe more?

Part 2 – Main Section:

SET: Rewards and Cost

4. Have you ever sold your products or services in some other ways?
5. In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat for selling (in comparison to other ways)?
6. Do you find that usage of Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat helping you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?

SST: Informational Support and Emotional Support

7. Do you think you receive enough messages or notifications from the buyers?
8. Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?
9. What kind of notifications/feedbacks do you get from the buyers after you inform them about the problem/trouble encountered?

Trust

10. If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?
11. How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?

Commitment

12. Do you feel a sense of belonging to Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat? How often do you use this kind of platform?
13. Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?

Satisfaction

14. How would you describe your feeling when selling things on Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat?

Information Sharing/ Knowledge Sharing

15. Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, you share product's general description such as its color, size, etc.
16. Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding to the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).
17. How often do you post/ share such kind of news/ information/ knowledge?

Network

18. When you chose Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat for selling purpose, have you considered your network?

   o If Yes, in what way do you think your network (circle of friends) affect your selling activity?
   o If No, does a group network play any role to you? In what way?

19. Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (That means from this activity, you have more acquaintances)

Part 3 - Ending questions
(Interviewers should summarize the factors which have been mentioned above, based on that to ask the following questions)

20. What influences/ motivates you most to sell on Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat?
21. Is there anything more you would like to add in terms of what stimulate you to sell things?

Appendix 2 – Interview transcript with Respondent 1 (RP1)

Date: 28th, April 2016
Present: Alla Volkovynska (Alla) and Respondent 1 (RP1)
Interview format: Skype Video Call
Interview duration: 17 minutes 06 seconds
Transcribed by: Alla Volkovynska
Transcription date: 30th, April 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Alla	Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times? If yes: Which one?	
2	RP1	Yes, I have sold lots of things. I sold our baby carriage and lots of clothes, both baby and adults, for woman and man.	
3	Alla	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on VKontakte?	
4	RP1	Maybe one year ago. I just put the photo of the shoes. Then a girl wrote to me. She asked how to buy them. I gave her my card number, she paid for them and I sent them by mail.	
5	Alla	How did you make a decision to sell things on VKontakte?	
6	RP1	I was using VKontakte and I decided to sell our things because we live in two room apartment, there are lots of things and we don't have spare space… I can use VK on my phone, I get messages on my phone and I'm more used to using it.	FL
7	Alla	Have you ever sold your products in some other ways?	
8	RP1	Yes. I sold on Kloomba, OLX [sites similar to Ebay and Blocket].	
9	Alla	In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using VKontakte for selling (in comparison to other ways)?	
10	RP1	It is easy; I can read [messages] in any place I am. If I have free time at work, I can just switch on my phone, check and sell some things. I can do it when I'm on my holiday. It is easy for me. I have lots of friends there and it is safely. I feel safe there.	UB
11	Alla	Do you find that usage of VKontakte helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?	
12	RP1	Yes, I think it helps me. I'm used to use VK. I have my personal page and now I know how to use it, I don't have to learn something new.	
13	Alla	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buyers?	
14	RP1	I think I get enough. And I don't have enough time to answer them [all].	CT
15	Alla	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?	
16	RP1	Enough understanding, enough encouragement, but not enough trust. I'm an honest person. From my permanent buyers I receive enough trust, but new buyers can't trust new people [sellers]. So I created a page where my permanent buyers can leave their thanks and then new buyers can read them and see that I'm not a liar, I'm not a bad person, but that I'm honest and that I'm working there.	CT RW
17	Alla	So, your permanent buyers help you to create good reputation.	
18	RP1	Yes.	

19	Alla	What kind of notifications/feedback do you get from the buyers after you inform them about the problem/trouble encountered?	
20	RP1	Yes, I have enough understanding, they say: it is OK.	
21	Alla	What kind of feedback do you get from the buyers?	
22	RP1	Almost all of them are 5 or 8, the best once [talks about rating].	
23	Alla	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?	
24	RP1	I recently had this situation. I was selling a watch and I decided to sell it to the person who asked me first. The other girl told me that she could pay for it directly. So two girls paid for the watch with 1 min difference. I sold this watch to the person who asked first. The other girl told me, she would wait for it one month (since I get it from China) and I sent it to her two days ago and she replied: thank you.	
25	Alla	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?	
26	RP1	I don't have to do it. They pay me money first and only then I sell them products.	
27	Alla	Do you feel a sense of belonging to Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat? How often do you use this kind of platform?	
28	PR1	Maybe no. If I'm at home, I use it every day, when I'm away then one, two, three days [without using it].	
29	Alla	Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?	
30	RP1	No, I have not thought about it. I have done a great job here. I have feedbacks. On the other platform everything will be new, and I'll need to do everything from the beginning.	RW FL
31	Alla	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on VKontakte?	
32	RP1	Ok, thank you, one more thing sold. That's it. Positive, happy feelings.	
33	Alla	Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity?	
34	RP1	I think, yes. Information sharing is main in selling. People want to choose the right size, colour, model. It is the main [most important] thing for them.	IS
35	Alla	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity?	
36	RP1	Maybe yes, but only few people ask about it. Not all of buyer ask me to share my knowledge on the subject.	
37	Alla	How often do you post or share such kind ofnews/information/knowledge?	
38	RP1	Knowledge – when people ask me, then I share. I can share it only when I have the product, if I have not seen the product I can't share it. If I have not seen the product, I reply that I have not got it yet and that is why can't tell much about it. When it comes to information sharing I can read about the product on the site where I order like on Taobao. So I can share the information even without having a product. I use information sharing more often than knowledge sharing.	IS
39	Alla	When you choose VKontakte for selling purposes, have you considered your network?	
40	RP1	Yes, first of all my own network and then other people.	
41	Alla	In what way do you think your circle of friends affect your selling activity?	
42	RP1	They leave feedbacks, they tell their friends, other people can see the products they have bought at my shop [page VK]. They share the information and invite new friends.	RW NW
43	Alla	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network?	
44	RP1	Yes, I think it helps me. I'm not interested in acquaintances, but I'm interested in attracting more buyers. One page is my personal and the other	

45	Alla	is only for selling.	
45	Alla	What influences you most to sell on VKontakte?	
46	RP1	I began to sell in VK because it is easier, I ordered different clothes for my baby in VK. It was a good very good for me, convenient. So I thought that I could do it myself. These examples motivated me to sell things in VK.	CN RW
47	Alla	Among the subjects discussed earlier (trust, network, information- & knowledge sharing) what are the most important for you?	
48	RP1	The most important is trust, if the buyer trusts you, everything will be good.	TT

Appendix 3 – Interview transcript with Respondent 2 (RP2)

Date:	2nd, May 2016
Present:	Alla Volkovynska (Alla) and Respondent 2 (RP2)
Interview format:	Skype video call
Interview duration:	32 minutes 12 seconds
Transcribed by:	Alla Volkovynska
Transcription date:	10th, May 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Alla	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on VKontakte?	
2	RP2	That was garment. This was 4 years ago. It all happened by accident, I was working on my eye-lashes at a beauty-shop and wanted to earn more. I tried to put some clothes on sale through VK. My girlfriends started to buy, then girlfriends of my girlfriends. These were dresses by affordable prices. This is how it started and it began to grow. I have been selling for 4 years now, maybe 4,5.	
3	Alla	How did you make a decision to sell things on VKontakte? Can you describe more?	
4	RP2	My sales are clothes for the middle-class. Who can afford it? Youth, people who don't go to fancy shops to try it on. In VK the clothes are sold on an eye-sight, you see it – you want it. You see a beautiful person wearing it and you sell it. This is the best place to sell at. On an auction you may sell one dress, but on VK you can find a wholesale buyer and sell 100 of them. It's another income, the wholesales. There are people who find us on VK, they are from Russia, Kazakhstan and they also buying wholesales. This works as a storefront.	TA
5	Alla	In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using VKontakte for selling (in comparison to other ways)?	
6	RP2	First of all, it is very easy to upload a picture and its description. A person may comment, may share, may issue a purchase order, makes an album at his page and sends me the link so I know what to buy and from whom. Secondly, there are a lot of items. You can see who is selling what. There are plenty of these internet shops. I think there are tens of thousands. Everyone is selling, young and old. Everyone, especially in Ukraine, everyone is selling. VK is the most popular network [for this]. FB – is more for reading interesting articles or communicating with friends. By the way, Instagram has also become an interesting platform for the sales. I think it expanded to everywhere as a sales platform. Previously people communicated there through the photos but now they sell a lot. But fewer people than in VK. Anyway, people spend more time on VK, especially youth age group up to 25. On Instagram both younger and older, on VK up to 25 and buying clothes with pleasure.	UB PL TA
7	Alla	Have you ever sold your products/ services in some other ways?	
8	RP2	Actually we tried to have a shop it is not on the list because it demands lots of investment. You have to buy merchandise, rent a store, hire a person, pay for electricity, heating, water, shop accessories. You have to buy a lot. Only 20-30% get sold. The rest you are trying to get rid of – for any money. Otherwise you will make loss. Some items are sold, some new arrive but there is no money for that. Virtual sales are much easy because you are selling a photo. There are big wholesales warehouses. I	RW

		live in city of Odessa and here we have a huge wholesales market called "7th km". Items from Turkey, China and even Ukraine. You make a nice looking photo of an item but you don't buy it. You place a photo on a social network and person who wants to buy it has already pre-paid it. With that money you go and buy it and send it to the buyer by adding your share. You are not losing anything; image uploading is free on VK. Easy and uncomplicated. You are selling the service without any invest-ment.	
9	Alla	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buy-ers?	
10	RP2	A year ago I made an album with comments and suggestions. Now it has approximately 160 reviews. It's not a lot but it helps people who are not sure. There some dishonest sellers who put a nice looking photo but when item arrives the buyer is not happy. The expectations and reality do not match. I work more honestly, I choose items myself, I judge what I want to sell what I don't. That's why I get good reviews. People who might be worried, after reading the reviews can order and be sure that everything will be fine and they will get what they expect. Trust in me as a seller is very important. There are many sellers who take money but not send the purchase at all. People who got cheated several times don't risk to buy from a random person on a social network. They are many clients and they are different. There is a potential buyer who saw [an item], who liked [it] and who bought it. And there are some… Right now I have 840 unopened messages on VK. Each day I get at least 20 new messages. But you understand but the half of them are… One wrote to me in March 2013, asked many-many questions and then disappeared, after 4 days of conversation. Then, she writes to me in 2014 – about same item, many-many questions. Then again, in 2015, I spend my time and energy on her. Now she writes to me again but I don't want to answer because it's a waste of energy and time. However, I might be a bit relaxed seller. I have my wholesales buyers and "the one who is fed will not look for food". I have people whom I trust and with whom it is easy to work. Those who are pain the arse you don't want to work with. In order to sell well you need to set little share. I know those who set 100% or even 200% margin. But then no one will buy that dress. My trick is to choose quality merchandise and set minimal margin. I earn 50 UAH (2 USD) on any item. You cannot find it cheaper, I provide quality and price. That's why I get my clients which will never leave.	TT RW CT
11	Alla	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?	
12	RP2	It depends on a client. It can be a situation with defects and the customer is calm and asks what to do. Of course I exchange it on my expense, plus provide delivery and give bonus on next purchase. I always want to stay in good relations with the client. We always show goodwill and buy-ers understand it. For example, the colour was wrong, the client chose red and I somehow sent blue. We are all human and we all make mis-takes. It's important to stay humane. But people are different. One girl claimed there was a defect. We exchanged even those the delivery was expensive and from Russia. The dress arrived but there were no defects. I asked her to show where is the defect. "Have you seen how it fits girl on this photo?" Wait, you ordered size M, you size is 3XL and it will not look the same as on a size S model. There is a saying "all sellers are bastards and their size M models are much smaller". It happens when a person weighs 120 kg. Of course, most of the clients are good and this job is quite enjoyable.	EST
13	Alla	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ ser-vice, how do you choose whom to sell?	
14	RP2	It never happens. The items are always in store. If some merchandise is finishing they start to make it again. But if I had to choose… If there is a big wholesales buyer who wants this dress I will accommodate the one with whom I work longer and another one I will propose good alternative. There is a lot of merchandise nowadays, there is always something to sell.	

15	Alla	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?	
16	RP2	I am responsible the merchandise until it is delivered to the buyer. I am responsible for the currier, responsible for the one I buy from, for the store where I buy, for the money I have got. The whole responsibility is on me. If something goes wrong in this chain, if currier lost it or if my store got the wrong one, I will figure it out with them. But I'm responsible in front of my client and until they have purchase in their hands it's all my problems. All *force majeure* etc.	
17	Alla	Does the buyer pay for the goods before shipment?	
18	RP2	Yes, this system is developed over the years. Initially, when I just started to work I wanted to make concessions to people. We were ready to sell and post and the seller could pay later. We have such service as "pay on delivery" by Novaya Pochta [the name of post firm]. You choose this service, then the person [buyer] receives [a parcel], take a look at it and then takes it. But it turns out that you invest your money, you redeem the goods from the warehouse, you pay for the courier, you pay for the purchasing agent and then it it all starts… Sorry, but I did not receive my salary; I broke my leg; my husband left and took the keys from the apartment; I found the same dress and it did not suit me, and I do not even want to take it now. Not only that, you bought a dress that is very difficult to return, which basically means that you bought it for yourself, but also you pay forfeit to Novaya Pochta because it was staying there and a whole bunch of unnecessary wastage. Therefore, nothing strengthens the relationships better than payment in advance. Considering my experience, I say this with confidence. Because when you have paid, you're ready for anything. You run and take it, and you're happy, and no unnecessary questions arise. And the salary is there, and the husband is there and everything as it should be.	
19	Alla	Do you feel a sense of belonging to VKontakte? How often do you use this kind of platform?	
20	RP2	It is business. I don't have such feelings as my younger sister has. They write to each other, listen to music, have some groups, they decide and discuss different things. For me it is clearly business. I like FB more for communication. There you can really learn something. Generally speaking, there is nothing better than live communication. VKontakte is just a job. If tomorrow VKontakte closed, I think I would have turned grey. Because this page, which has a large number of goods, is generated by many years. For every photo you need to write price, size, colour; which means that it is really a large amount of work. It seems as if it is not that much, but all these 6000 friends who crowded to you over the years, these reviews ... Indeed, although it is on the internet, it's really your job. You don't need to buy a million of offices and hire a million of people, you can have a phone in your hands and be able to show, tell and find a good thing. I'm very dependent on VKontakte, but not in terms of personal communication, but in terms of my job.	RW CM
21	Alla	Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?	
22	RP2	I've thought about it. I would like to expand the revenue and earn more money. I opened the site, the usual one, which has com domain, and even started Instagram. Still VKontakte is on top. It is not that many who contacts through that site, although there seems to be going promotion, but the least. Communication is more difficult because you need to sit [be available], they write to your email or in some chat, you constantly need to be online. VKontakte is much easier, it is much more accessible. And Instagram is a retail sale. You also can not earn that much with it. I have tried various other social networks, but still I come back to this page in the VKontakte. It is, after all, generated by years.	
23	Alla	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on VKontakte?	
24	RP2	I am in fact very sociable person. All my clients are becoming my friends. That is, you do not just sell clothes, you sell the mood. With all of them I go through some rueful feelings. One girl left her boyfriend, and she will be with him in the same public place and she wants to look good. To-	EST

		gether with her you are going through her problem, you are trying to help her to pick something that would suit her both in terms of money and in terms of…	
25	Alla	Do people really tell you all this?	
26	RP2	Yes, of course. Lots of girls. There are also regular customers with whom you talk about everything. Someone's children got sick, someone got some other problem. They become friends. You do not feel like you're just a huckster. You sell pleasure, joy, confidence. You see an unsure girl; you say to her: you are beautiful. Look at your hips, you can put any neckline. You infuse a person with self-confidence and also get pleasure from it. I definitely enjoy. I'm also such a person, I just like to sell, but not like on the market when people stand and sell. Through communication things are so easily sold […]. You establish good relationships with everyone, somehow friendly relations. I cannot say about friendship, but it has some good friendly relations, in which you do not feel like the seller of the goods, some sort of careless attitude, came to you, bought, forgot. Everything happens on such friendly note. I don't keep ungrateful customers with consumptive attitude. I really enjoy the fact that I communicate in a friendly manner with the girls and their boyfriends who want to do something pleasant for girls. And that still get a good income.	SF RW
27	Alla	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).	
28	RP2	Of course, it's your highlight. When you communicate with someone as if he or she is close to you, you try to help him/ her... Well, something trivial… Oh, I cannot pick up [a product] because my child has toothache. If small child has a growing tooth, you need to give him/ her some pill and pain will disappear. What kind of pill? This and that. Oh, cool. Then she wrote to me: I picked up the dress, it is great, but when it comes to the pill so even greater, thank you. You begin to share your knowledge somehow. It seems to be a trifle, but still you remember about it and the person who communicates with you.	
29	Alla	How often do you post/share such kind of news/information/knowledge?	
30	RP2	If there is a possibility, it is always possible to share something [some knowledge]. Every day. There are so close girls. For example, there are girls, the wholesalers, with whom I communicate to every day. For instance, you do wholesale buying for a certain person once a week, so she becomes close to you. You wish each other a happy new year, happy birthday to the husbands, and things like that. You say to her: oh, did you take this dress? It is great, I took for myself, very good quality, linen. She says: I want this one, but where would I go in it? It is possible to go to the church. We communication, and they become as close friends with whom you can share and exchange experiences [knowledge]. I cannot say that I communicate with the person in order to sell him/ her something. It is a casual communication and it benefits the sales. So one might say.	
31	Alla	When you chose VKontakte for selling purposes, have you considered your network? If yes, in what way do you think your circle of friends affect your selling activity?	
32	RP2	I knew that from the beginning selling on social networks is a chain, which grows in any direction. For example, I'm originally from Kirovograd, I moved to Odessa 9 years ago. I have a circle of acquaintances in Odessa and some circle in Kirovograd. My grandmother lived in Kremenchug therefore a little [circle] from Kremenchug. And so it all went. I sold my first dresses to two girls from Odessa. They show to their friends, sisters, they evaluated, said: where did you get it from. For example, people who lived in Kirovograd said: oh, this is [name of the respondent] who sells. I can buy from her, I trust her. I sold to 2 girls from Kirovograd, rumours have grown as a jungle telegraph. Oh, I bought from her, it is good. Then brother, godfather, godfather of my godmother and so on. It reached Kremenchug. Then girls from Moscow appeared. They con-	NW RW

		tacted me without nobody, no, by the way, through someone. Still the girls recommended me. One after another and has reached already Russia, Kazakhstan and all over Ukraine. It worked this way and everyone knows about me. Of course, the most important thing is to have a good reputation, this is critically. Because if you finished you deal with the person unfairly, this lies over your reputation. You should always be good.	
33	Alla	What influences/ motivates you most to sell on VKontakte?	
34	RP2	To say honestly, I had such a moment that I did not want to be strongly tied to the work, to sharp work, when you wake up at 6, make coffee at 6:30, have breakfast, run, you have to enter the office a quarter to... It is not important if you are sick, if there is rain, if it is cold outside, you have to be at place. It is very difficult for me to obey. It is hard to adapt to the schedule. I wanted something that I could do with ease, so that I could kind of sleep as long as I wanted, and no one to obey and to earn. I was thinking [about it] for a long time, I went for eyelashes [was extending eyelashes], but then I decided to try with sales. Then again, "the 7th kilometre", if you live in Odessa, it is a sin not to use such opportunity. People are coming to us from all over Ukraine in order to buy, sell these goods and so on. I live here, it takes 15 mins for me to reach "the 7th kilometre", to reach the goods. So why not to try? I started to work, then I realized that I was pregnant. I understood that I needed to stay at home more, and less time to spend somewhere at working places. I hired a courier purchaser so that I would not need to walk and could take it easy. So that is how I work. I can move away anywhere I want, in any corner of the country, the the most important thing for me is to have my magic phone and connection, internet, WiFi, 3G. I need no office, nothing. It is minimal investment. I am not responsible in front of anyone, I mean, there are no managers who could give a lesson to me; to not let me take medical leave or to not provide me with vacation pay. I belong to myself, if I want I work, I can take a weekend when I want, I can higher or lower the price. So, it is like that.	CN

Appendix 4 – Interview transcript with Respondent 3 (RP3)

Date: 9th, May 2016
Present: Alla Volkovynska (Alla) and Respondent 3 (RP3)
Interview format: Skype video call
Interview duration: 34 minutes 24 seconds
Transcribed by: Alla Volkovynska
Transcription date: 29th, April 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Alla	Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times? If yes: Which one?	
2	RP3	I did not sell my own things. There are those groups in FB, I mainly buy there. In VK I was selling my own crafted items, berry combs [combs for blueberries harvesting]. I [sold] them quite a lot during one year, maybe, 300 pieces through VK. I don't think it is an [special] experience; it was not a big internet shop. I wanted more [sales], I think it is not enough. With the help of different advertisements, altogether I managed to sell maybe around 500-600-700-800 pieces per year in Ukraine. Through VK it was around 300-400 pieces, that I contacted people in such a way and sold them. Probably, the majority was sold through VK. I tried to advertise in different groups.	
3	Alla	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on Facebook/ VKontakte?	
4	RP3	It happened 2 or 3 years ago, sales started to happen.	
5	Alla	How did you make a decision to sell things on Facebook/ VKontakte? Can you describe more?	
6	RP3	Because it is cheap; it is possible to make more people interested; it is for free to create group, to create a profile. I created not a person [talks about profile], I created a company, it was called [company's name], this was the profile. Also there was a group called "Berry pickers". I just wanted to gather people there, who was interested in berry gathering, so that later on I could propose my items.	RW
7	Alla	Have you ever sold your products/ services in some other ways?	
8	RP3	Yes, I was looking by myself for those, who would need [them], I was looking for consumers by myself, in Sweden, in Ukraine. I called them. I was using Ukrainian site Slando, it was called this was at the beginning. Many [buyers] were writing to me also through it, I sold [to them]. There was a site all.biz. It is a free site of a certain level, and it was doing quite well in showing my berry combs in search results, I was contacted [by buyers]. It was quite effective, the selling in VK, because I found, I joined groups of berry gatherers and I was proposing my berry combs just to them. It was rather good actually through VK.	TA
9	Alla	In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using Facebook/ VKontakte for selling (in comparison to other ways)?	
10	RP3	It is that you can immediately find people, who are interested in your items. There are special groups such as "Berry pickers", "Mushroom gatherers", "A berry picking trip to Sweden" or "Trip to Finland". Then I found people who organize these trips and whom I wouldn't find another way. I immediately contacted those who set up the groups and sold to them in large amounts. Then, they sold it further to the others.	TA RW

11	Alla	Do you find that usage of Facebook/ VKontakte helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?	
12	RP3	Effort, yes. It is much easier than to create own site, it is much easier to keep life in those groups, than to create and maintain site somehow separately. Much easier. And the result, essentially, is the same as to create own site… I think.	RW
13	Alla	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buyers?	
14	RP	The one always wants more, but I received enough, I think.	
15	Alla	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?	
16	RP3	I don't know. It is difficult to answer this question. I did not receive any encouragement. My encouragement was my sales.	
17	Alla	What kind of notifications/feedback do you get from the buyers after you inform them about the problem/trouble encountered?	
18	RP3	Of, course, mainly there were such people who had understanding. I did not have… no, I had… I was trying to have understanding, but once I did not receive money for what I sent, they had not paid. I trusted [them]. In general, everything was good. People had understanding, they just gave Nova Poshta [post office] address, name and just waited for the parcel. Oh, finally I saw it [talks about something he noticed posted on his profile]. There is a video, how my comb works, my combine harvester… This can be feedback for itself. This is feedback from my buyers. It is an advertisement for them and for me it is also quite a good advertisement, I think. They advertise themselves and advertise my comb. I think this is a positive feedback, because it really shows how my appliance, my comb, works. He works with it in rather harsh conditions. I'm satisfied. Here, I remembered… There were moments when, of course, people told me, give it [to us], we want to try your miraculous comb, - they called it. It was also very pleasant. I don't know why…	
19	Alla	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?	
20	RP3	I choose… there was such a moment last year… just it was such a client whom I knew for many years… I know him, he was my big client, but I know that he buys and sells to the others. But at that time I did not sell to him all combs, I gave him only a certain number [of them]. At that time at the beginning, I was interested to attract more customers. So I was trying to divide the amount equally between buyers.	
21	Alla	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?	
22	RP3	I always tried to receive money before, to check… If it is not a new buyer, I expected cash [meaning money transferring into the account] from him/ her if I was sending it by post. There was one buyer… I forgot the name of the city in Sweden, so, I knew him before. I knew him from a previous year, so I sent him the combs, [then] he sent me money. Mostly no one cheats in Sweden, if I know him/ her. This is rarity. It was not a big amount of cash, I think, the reputation was more important for that buyer than some… little money to cheat.	
23	Alla	Do you feel a sense of belonging to Facebook/ VKontakte? How often do you use this kind of platform?	
24	RP3	I have dependence, but I think that I don't have such thing as belonging. My group, I just left all of these, I don't check, I don't have interest in it. Now I use VK less, FB more. I use VK for the purpose of checking 2-3 times a week.	CM
25	Alla	Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?	
26	RP3	I don't want to switch from VK because I have quite many Russian speaking clients. Sales are going much better on VK than on FB. I have the same page on FB, but it happens much slower, it works not that well. There are no reasons to switch to the other site. There are many client,	PL NW

		groups, VK is the most popular sort to say. In my opinion, there are most berry pickers groups. I was searching, how many groups there are on Odnoklassniki, well, much less. There are more other groups that you find with the help of ads in VK. I don't see the alternative. In such case it would be if in Ukraine FB was used in the same way as in Sweden for selling things. Maybe, they don't have VK, I don't know. If we had more people who moved to FB, more users, more actively and there were sale groups, of course, I'd put more effort into FB.	
27	Alla	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on Facebook/ VKontakte?	
28	RP3	I was annoyed by people who were not enough providing information about where to send. Or they did not provide with the last name, or phone number that had to be specified according to posting require-ments. This was always giving me a trouble. But in general, I have good impression. There were many clients. I think if it was internet shop, there would be a form in which they would to fill in everything and then it would be possible to send. Many people just ask questions, they pump for in-formation about the product. You need to explain, talk… communicate. Sometimes there is no time, but there are 5 messages a day, and it is very difficult. We were chatting and it took an hour or even 2, and then the next day even more talks.	SF CT
29	Alla	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).	
30	RP3	I was actively sharing the knowledge. I was providing with recommenda-tions because we had we main sizes for the combs, bigger and smaller. That is why I was actively asking them if they planned to pick berries in Ukraine or if they planned to go to pick berries in Sweden or Finland. Different combs are suitable here. I was sharing the size. I was telling them what kind of options they had, if it was a woman or a man, depend-ing on what suits whom, and then people could make the choice. It was not stimulating me to continue my selling activity because to ex-plain the same thing to each and every one was be difficult. But it is not only… if it would be only information sharing or knowledge sharing about the combs, it would be normal, it could take 5 mins for person to under-stand when you explain. But there are those who ask about trip to Swe-den, how to reach there and so on. Well, such things. It did not stimulate me additionally… It didn't increase my income. It is possible that sales were increased due to my descriptions of trips to Sweden in the group, but I didn't do it very well. There were a couple of advice, maybe, those who were searching could find in search results, maybe, that is how they found my group in VK. I didn't write such things often, it was a couple of such articles, how to buy a ticket to the ferry, which visa is needed, there was something else. I don't remember.	CT
31	Alla	Did people constantly ask you such questions?	
32	RP3	Not, constantly, but it happened.	
33	Alla	When you choosed Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat for selling purposes, have you considered your network? If yes, in what way do you think your circle of friends affect your selling activity?	
34	RP3	I was not taking my friend to consideration because I was targeting big-ger audience. Of course, I have friends who pick berries, but rather few. If I was trying to sell more than a thousand of combs in a year, I could sell 10-20 to my friends. Maybe I was selling with discount to them or was giving as a gift.	
35	Alla	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (means from this activity, you have more acquaintances)	
36	RP3	Yes, my buyers were becoming my acquaintances, probably, not friends, but acquaintances. Only… there were such whom I met, it was pretty nice upon purchase. The meetings were pretty interesting, we were	RW

		shared experience, telling how and where we were picking. The next year they visited me. The meetings were interesting. New people, new experience. We shared experience how to work in Sweden, well… I was asking where they would pick berries, how they would pick, if they needed people. I think it was very useful.	
37	Alla	What influences/ motivates you most to sell on Facebook/ VKontakte?	
38	RP3	Initially I have chosen VK only so that people could visit my profile, it was as if additionally, profile with information so that Google could show it. Later on I saw that it had many group users, supporters sort to say. It stimulated me to continue to work in VK.	
39	Alla	Is there anything more you would like to add in terms of what stimulate you to sell things?	
40	RP3	I don't think that you missed on anything. Probably, you have forgotten to mention that VK is very easy to advertise, that you can spam more than on FB. It is really an important thing that everyone says. It stimulates. It is wrong, I realize that it is spam, that I make people suffer. There were some groups, it was some city, I posted there my combs. I was often banned; I was adding some people into friend list … I had such experience. I was banned from the groups. There was a group about berry picking, I posted there about my combs and there was some woman who wrote to me in such a way that I had to pay for adds in their group. And that was it, I was banned there.	

Appendix 5 – Interview transcript with Respondent 4 (RP4)

Date: 27th, April 2016
Present: Alla Volkovynska (Alla) and Respondent 4 (RP4)
Interview format: Skype video call
Interview duration: 26 minutes 16 seconds
Transcribed by: Alla Volkovynska
Transcription date: 4th, May 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Alla	Have you ever sold anything of social networking platforms?	
2	RP4	Yes, I did.	
3	Alla	One time or many times?	
4	RP4	It happened couple of times. Like, 5 times maybe I was attempting to sell things and (not?) all of them were successful.	
5	Alla	Which platform did you use?	
6	RP4	Facebook.	
7	Alla	Do you remember the first time you tried to sell something on FB?	
8	RP4	Yes, I think so.	
9	Alla	Can you just describe?	
10	RP4	I think it was around a year ago. Then I was selling two pairs of shoes, winter boots, and both of them were sold. I think it was the first time, if I'm not mistaken.	
11	Alla	How did you make a decision to sell things particularly on FB?	
12	RP4	I saw that many people were selling plenty of things on FB groups so I thought it would be a great possibility. First, I was buying thing via FB by myself and then, after that, I thought I could use this platform to sell thing on my own.	RW
13	Alla	So it was mainly through the example of other people [that you decided to sell on FB].	
14	RP4	Yes, exactly.	
15	Alla	Would you say that by buying you could see that it works for other people? Can you elaborate a bit more?	
16	RP4	Yes, I can say that selling via FB works very-very good especially for students because they are selling plenty of things there. Sometimes if you want to buy something very often it's a queue and a thing is already booked.	
17	Alla	Have you ever sold any of your products in some other way?	
18	RP4	Blocket. My partner and I sold there two books.	
19	Alla	Did it work?	
20	RP4	Yeah, pretty well, we mailed books by post. So, it was pretty good.	
21	Alla	If you think about Blocket in comparison to FB, what are the benefits of using FB that you can name?	
22	RP4	First is the biggest, it is free. If you are posting something there it is free and you don't have any time limitations. On Blocket I think it is one month or something. Then you need to repost it again, you need to pay addi-	RW

		tional money. For example, if you are posting something on FB, you don't have to pay for the amount of pictures that you attach. When it comes to people who are attending FB and Blocket, I think that the target audience is a bit different because on Blocket it is mostly Swedish people and on FB it is mostly foreign students. There are some seasons like autumn when they just come and they need a lot of things and if it was autumn I would definitely choose FB because the things [that are sold] they would just disappear immediately because they need everything.	
23	Alla	Do you find that usage of FB saves you time and you put less effort into your selling activity?	
24	RP4	Yes, it is faster to make selling ad. You just upload thing and it is very-very fast. On Blocket it goes slower. You need to upload all the stuff and write a description as it is obligatory to make some description, on FB you can just write "Bike". The payment process it also takes time on Blocket. On FB it is kind of more convenient. You immediately see who is writing you, which people are writing you via FB because you can see their profiles. You can see if they are available, where they live approximately something like that. On Blocket everything is anonymous.	RW CN
25	Alla	When you were selling your products did you receive enough messages or notifications from buyers?	
26	RP4	Yea, I think so. One more benefit of FB, you have a chat conversation, which Blocket does not have. On Blocket you are sending emails or regular texting messages [sms], which you need to pay money for. (Repeating question and explaining more in terms of other FB possibilities such as bidding) On FB it is easy to encourage people to bid for a product, but not on Blocket.	IST
27	Alla	When you chat with the potential buyer, how many messages do you think is enough in order to understand that the person is [serious]?	
28	RP4	I don't know. 5 are pretty much enough. First, you get a question of the product is relevant, you say yes. Then you have some questions about its state, if it is not broken and working properly. Then address, you set the time and person comes, that is it. So, in average it is 5 messages not more.	
29	Alla	Did you feel that the buyer gives you understanding or encouragement if you needed one?	
30	RP4	Encouragement for what?	
31	Alla	For example, if you had some trouble, you were not able to send things in time, so you wrote to him or her and write to postpone the process.	
32	RP4	It never happened to me, but I am sure that if I needed to say to buyer about some changes in the circumstances, the buyers would be pretty nice to me. They have always been nice.	EST
33	Alla	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?	
34	RP4	It is kind of informal rule that the one who first wrote to you is the first in case if a person behaves properly and does not postpone the time endlessly. So, it is usually the first person.	
35	Alla	How do you ensure reliability of your potential buyer?	
36	RP4	There is no way to be sure. You set the time, if a person is coming and buying thing then that is it. If the person is not coming, then you just say that you can not keep the thing forever and you need to sell it to someone else. That's all.	
37	Alla	So, you don't check it in any other way?	
38	RP4	No, I don't. On FB you never need to do it, maybe it is relevant to situations when you need to send something by post. I was never checking the people. I could see their profile but nothing more then that.	TT
39	Alla	But you checked the profile, right, in order to see if the person looks OK?	
40	RP4	If the person looks normal, then it is OK. But I don't know if I was really checking, maybe, it was out of curiosity because you get some image of	TT

		your buyer. Then you adjust your communication according to image you have got. On Blocket it is harder to know if the person is young or old, just name and that is all.	
41	Alla	Would you say that you have sense of belonging to FB or any other platform that you use?	
42	RP4	I'm not addicted luckily. I have not been using FB until I came to Sweden in 2010. When I started University education here, I had a profile but I have not been really using it. I started to use it just for my school stuff and then it became more and more and more, but no I'm not addicted to that.	
43	Alla	Have you ever thought to switch to another site? What would be the reasons for that?	
44	RP4	I use VKontakte as well. I use it because one part of my friends are in VK, while the other in FB. On FB it is local ones mostly and I just need to keep in touch with them. It is school, it is my internship. It is just people who mostly live here in Sweden and mostly in Western Europe. In VK I still have people who are in my home country and I talk to them through VK. But when it comes to interface I can not say which of these two platforms is better.	
45	Alla	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on FB?	
46	RP4	Release. I feel good.	
47	Alla	Is release a satisfying feeling?	
48	RP4	Yes, it is. You just sell something because you do not need it. It is pity to throw away things, so it is good that you get rid of and that you get some money, and some other people will use it.	
49	Alla	Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity?	
50	RP4	It is hard to say. What stimulates me is that it is easier, simple and faster. There are also more buyers, more people who can buy a thing then on Blocket. Probably, information sharing does not stimulate me. Yes, it is good that you can write unlimited, but otherwise not.	
51	Alla	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity?	
52	RP4	We were selling a bed and we talked a lot about its being comfortable, not too soft and not too hard… I don't know how it answer it. It makes things easier, it is easier to sell when you have chat with the buyer and when you can share some personal experience regarding the product, but at the same time it is not the reason why I sell things, if I don't have anything to sell then I don't. It is helping to sell but it is not the reason why I sell. To be specific, it does not stimulate me to sell more.	UB
53	Alla	How often do you post/share such kind of news/information/knowledge?	
54	RP4	Maybe twice. First contact when we chat, then when person comes to look at the product and we speak during the meeting.	
55	Alla	When you choose Facebook for selling purposes, have you considered your network?	
56	RP4	No. I was mostly targeting Lund's students.	
57	Alla	When you were choosing FB selling group, did you consider group's network?	
58	RP4	I checked once when entering the group. I looked at the posts if people were buying there or not, if it is active or not. Of course, if the group is empty and no one is buying anything, then there is no meaning to post anything there.	NW
59	Alla	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network?	
60	RP4	It did not happen before. Some weeks ago we were selling a book and there was a girl who was very eager to speak. Then we just abandoned the conversation, because the girl wanted to talk a lot. But it depends on a person, but it would be great if the buyers would become my friend after all. Not all of them, but I'm quite open to new acquaintances.	

61	Alla	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network?	
62	RP4	It did not happen before. Some weeks ago we were selling a book and there was a girl who was very eager to speak. Then we just abandoned the conversation, because the girl wanted to talk a lot. But it depends on a person, but it would be great if the buyers would become my friend after all. Not all of them, but I'm quite open to new acquaintances.	
63	Alla	What influences you most to sell on Facebook?	
64	RP4	It is a target audience I guess. Mostly that it is easier to find buyer on Facebook then on Blocket. It also easier to contact people because there is a chat conversation and when you see a person [meaning possibility to look at the profile] it is easier to adjust your conversation to a particular person. For example, it helps to know if it is a girl who is 19 or a man who is 60 because your communication is different. I think it is easier to convince the person to buy something when you talk in a proper way. To see profiles helps though I am not sure if the person is very reliable as there is not personal details, but it feels like you are having this person in front of you. On Blocket you just speak with your eyes closed as you don't know whom you are talking to.	TA RW
65	Alla	So it helps you to visualize the buyer?	
66	RP4	I think it helps buyers too, because they see me and it is easy to speak.	
67	Alla	Is there anything more you would like to add in terms of what stimulate you to sell things on Facebook?	
68	RP4	No, that is it.	

Appendix 6 – Interview transcript with Respondent 5 (RP5)

Date: 01st, May 2016
Present: Alla Volkovynska (Alla) and Respondent 5 (RP5)
Interview format: Skype video call
Interview duration: 21 minutes 21 seconds
Transcribed by: Alla Volkovynska
Transcription date: 3rd, May 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Alla	Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times?	
2	RP5	Yes, up to 10 times. I used Facebook.	
3	Alla	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on Facebook?	
4	RP5	Probably, I think that the first time happened last winter, in the beginning of 2015. I was selling books.	
5	Alla	How did you make a decision to sell things on Facebook? Can you describe more?	
6	RP5	This was due to the specificity of the products. I was selling books in Russia, that is why I used Russian speaking local community.	
7	Alla	Have you ever sold your products/ services in some other ways?	
8	RP5	Yes, I used electronic trading platforms.	
9	Alla	In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using Facebook for selling (in comparison to other ways)?	
10	RP5	A buyer is not anonymous. You can see whom you sell to and depending on that to change decision.	RW
11	Alla	Do you find that usage of Facebook helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?	
12	RP5	Partially. Yes, because if you want you can immediately narrow down your target audience and thus faster to get answers and to complete the transaction.	RW
13	Alla	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buyers?	
14	RP5	Essentially, it is enough with one, if it is a buyer.	
15	Alla	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers?	
16	RP5	Could you explain more?	
17	Alla	What kind of notifications/feedback do you get from the buyers after you inform them about the problem/trouble encountered?	
18	RP5	I have never been in such situation. I was in a similar situation as a buyer, but not as a seller. But in general, it is also one of the advantages of selling through a social network since now almost everyone platform has chat attached, and and so when circumstances change, you can quickly adjust. I can see that Facebook with its Messenger works very well. It eliminates the need for phone number exchanges at the first stage, as people perceive a phone number as something more personal. Therefore, when preliminary agreed on the Messenger, people exchange	UB

		phone numbers. That concerns trust and facilitates situation.	
19	Alla	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?	
20	RP5	I choose the one who messaged first. I had a situation where I personally was more inclined to the buyer, who messaged second, but in order to preserve a good name and reputation, I have made an honest decision and sold to the one who first showed up.	RW
21	Alla	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?	
22	RP5	Again, the man is more transparent than when you sell through some trading platform and giving there your phone number. Somebody calls you, you have no idea who it is, and you agree on the meeting while having no idea who this person is. It is always a risk. Here [on FB] you have the opportunity to have a look at the person before you even say a word to him. That is why, yes, some degree of add-on security exists.	
23	Alla	Do you feel a sense of belonging to Facebook? How often do you use this kind of platform?	
24	RP5	I think, yes. There's something about it. I can see that, first of all, FB is now the leading social network of my equals in age. This is age related, first of all age related. FB has become such big part of life that you, also, feel yourself a part of it. Too big part of life is dependent on it. All activities, new friends… I use FB every day.	
25	Alla	Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?	
26	RP5	Now I do not see any alternative, because before FB, the dominant social [site] for me was LiveJournal. Generally speaking, we all left gradually, someone earlier, someone later. From the circle I had on LiveJournal, a part of people did not leave, maybe around 20%. The most important for me people left LiveJournal gradually. Those functional defects of FB, they are compensated by the audience and those technical features which also compensate, for example, the availability of Messenger, the possibility of events. Odnoklassniki is not an option absolutely, VK also, and there are no more big social sites.	
27	Alla	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on Facebook?	
28	RP5	In general, I am satisfied. Except of primary goal to sell a product, the ability to see to whom I'm selling, makes me glad. Especially when you sell things that are not so easy to give up emotionally, such as books, some children's toys. Where there is emotional component, it is more important to see to whom you are selling. It adds a sense of satisfaction.	EST
29	Alla	Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, you share product's general description such as its color, size.	
30	RP5	Yes, it helps. I see a direct link to the result. The exchange of information has a direct impact on the success of the event [selling]. Yes, it is needed. If a person [seller] describes a product well, a buyer will contact him/ her faster.	IS
31	Alla	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).	
32	RP5	Yes, definitely. The more complex the product is, the more important it is to share the experience.	KS
33	Alla	How often do you post/share such kind of news/information/knowledge?	
34	RP5	Every time when they are hard to sell items. For example, if you sell a ball, it is enough to write the diameter, the informational function, because everyone knows what a ball is. When you sell more unusual educational toys, then the person that never dealt with it would not understand? appreciate its potential at first sight. That is why you need to provide additional information.	

35	Alla	When you choosed Facebook/ VKontakte/ WeChat for selling purposes, have you considered your network?	
36	RP5	No, when I use FB for sales, one of the reasons is to not involve my personal network. Sales occur in groups. I take into account the number of group members.	NW
37	Alla	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (That means from this activity, you have more acquaintances)	
38	RP5	To some extent. Though, yes, after selling I have already run into people in my personal life to whom I have sold something. And then we say to each other: oh, hi, that is you who sold books to me. Somehow it expands network of acquaintances.	
39	Alla	What influences/ motivates you most to sell on Facebook?	
40	RP5	It is difficult to say. Definitely not the information/ knowledge sharing because it is possible to do on any trading platform. What I'm selling I still sell here and there. I did not switch to FB completely with sales. On FB I sell either specific product for which the target audience I see it in the FB, I already know where to look for; either it is, again, due to the nature of the goods, some things are very cheap, with a low price, so you want to avoid all the other markups. Things that I was selling on FB were always handed-in in person, that is, all mailing costs were eliminated. When there are some small things, for example, a simple low-cost children's toys that can be used by someone else, and you don't want to sell them expensive, you just want to put them in good care, but it needs to avoid the markups. The first reason, the ability to find the target audience for specific things.	TA RW
41	Alla	Is there anything more you would like to add in terms of what stimulate you to sell things?	
42	RP5	Well, probably, not.	

Appendix 7 – Interview transcript with Respondent 6 (RP6)

Date: 27th, April 2016
Present: Ning Bao (Ning), Alla Volkovynska (Alla) and Respondent 6 (RP6)
Interview format: Skype video call
Interview duration: 45 minutes 22 seconds
Transcribed by: Ning Bao and Alla Volkovynska
Transcription date: 29th, April 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Alla	Do you use any of social networks? What kind of platform do you use for social interaction?	
2	RP6	Yes. I am a member of quite a lot of social networks and some of them are used more than the other, and I can count them if you like. So I start with Facebook, I used Instagram, I used to use Flicker, but I am not longer active there. And before Facebook even I used to use, I used to use something called hi5 (if I remember correctly). And sometimes, I am on Google+. Although I don't really use it for sharing, just explore some of my friends who are there, not so much social but work oriented. And I'm not sure if I can call LinkedIn as a social network, so I am on LinkedIn, a bit more active, but only updating my profiling sometimes liking my friends' updating some their current work. I think these are all, yeah.	
3	Alla	So you are an active?	
4	RP6	Myself very active, but not so much posting, to be honest.	
5	Alla	How much time do you use to spend on (name of the platform)?	
6	RP6	All of these together? It's so hard to decide. To be honest... For instance, if I count LinkedIn, I wait for emails and there, the network is a little bit strange, because people from anywhere, they just want to add you for some reason. So I wait maybe once two or three weeks to check these staff and if like you have 10 or 15 friend requests, these are not friends basically, just unknown people. Then you looked at their profiles, and I see Ok, then I maybe contact these persons because it looks maybe interesting for future contact you never know what you can use it for. Sometimes I see some special profiles, so I would say an hour on LinkedIn when I checked it, so which is once in two or three weeks, so quite rarely, to be honest. Then I have Facebook, which I used to use more frequently previously, but to be honest, I kind of, the network expanded a lot, and I know if I see I have more than 500, or around 500 people in the network, it might sound exhausting for me, but for someone, not at all, because people might have 3000 people and so on. But it was a point when I used Facebook's feature which came in recently, that you could hide it, the people who just posted things. So what I did on Facebook is that I definitely hide it almost every one, so 500 people, I only have maybe 10 or 15 that I really see on daily posting. So the problem, then turned it that I continue use Facebook for completely different reason, not looking at how my friends are posing a picture one day in a bathroom, to be honest, but how I liked the pages, or different artist, or different use of outlets, and it looked like. Today if I checked Facebook which at least once per day, I checked it almost as a media outlet, because I have certain magazines that post interesting articles. Or I have something like National Geographic that they post some interesting staff.	

		So very very few things that come from my actual friend's networks because all of those are hided. Because initially it's a social tool you want to connect with your friends and family and expand you network in sense. But to me it became an overwhelming, so I just decided okey, I am going to continue using it. But it's quite rare. Because my personality is like that, I don't want to submit or post like every single day like a toilet picture which I found it. So you see, I turned on into someone, just to block it everyone [who blocked everyone]. Then I have Instagram. I posted more. I post pictures and so on. But my network is very very small in Instagram. Only my friends and family. I'm in that environment, I know these people. And I'm fine seeing those things. Because I have a daily contact with them, but 500 plus, it's just mind blocking, it was unnecessary, that's why Facebook turn to something more for media outlet, while Instagram remains this social contact for me. hi5, long ago, disappeared. Because Facebook came along, I guess people just disappeared from hi5. And Flicker, I'm very much interested in photography, so I used it to take different pictures and just posted some on Flicker, but for some reason that, I don't know why, so I didn't post any more Flicker pictures. I guess it has to do a lot of limitations Flicker had. So the limits just made me drop it. So I still have Flicker account active, but maybe not using it. And as I said, Google+, yeah, I see something come interesting through my Gmail account, because a friend or colleague mostly have posted interesting paper and so on, this is the only time I checked Google+, I don't think I ever post anything on Google+, no. I don't think I even have a picture, I might have a picture which is a very old one itself took from somewhere. So this is more or less my contact of using social media.	
7	Ning	So you just said a lot of social media platform, do you feel like you have some belonging to one of them?	
8	RP6	Yeah, that's true. It used to be a lot on Facebook in that sense, but since I turned into Instagram to check what's going on, on the daily staff people around me. I have more feeling I need to check Instagram rather than Facebook. I just feel that a daily update is necessary, and it's so handy because that it is on your phone, and it's one of those applications that you just press here. And right away you have Instagram, you can have a browse quickly, and you have five minutes away from it, so just have a overview what has going on today. But for Facebook, yes, I can check it too, but as I said when I see Facebook as a more extended network, I don't feel sorry if I haven't say a "Happy Birthday" to my friend, you know, a more distant friend, because I'm not getting in touch with them once in a year. I don't care if I don't say "Happy Birthday to you". Because now Facebook is kind of pushing you to do that or to congratulate them on every celebration. When we used to be free of these things, then that wasn't the contact of our living. I like it more previously. It was more private. I feel like it's more private, right? You have your close friend around you to do that. But people on Facebook are very much engaged. Those who have the huge networks, apparently, expect you to respond in a sense, so I try to drop from it. But if I am very active, and I keep, like, not looking they are doing, or not liking, not commenting, then they might be mad. So it's kind of balance, I want to break, that's sense.	
9	Alla	Just a quick question, how much time do you spend on social network?	
10	RP6	20 minutes, I checked not only social media, but also actual media, like BBC or CNN and local news. Later afternoon, or evening.	
11	Alla	Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times? If yes: Which one?	
12	RP6	Yes, actually I sold once, but I used Facebook for selling as a social media tool, and I also sold, actually trying to sell through selling sites, but it didn't work for some reason, but it works through social media, so I used Facebook and sold things. I was really happy the selling was so fast, I was impressed.	SF

13	Alla	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on Face-book?	
14	RP6	So first of all, we were moving with my partner, and we have a lot of things at home that have been used at least 6 years, and we thought that these were worn out. As we were moving quite a long distance, we needed transportation, and we thought if we take these staff to the new home, how much transportation we would have to pay to do that. So we realised that the transportation was costing already more than actual selling, because almost zero value it was, as we used them for 6 years. So we said to throw them away, it's a hard task for us, because you have to carry them and so on. So we said if we actually find a way to sell these [things], the buyer isn't away, at least in Sweden, and he is in a way obliged to actually come and pick things from you. So you sell it for what-ever money, but at least you get it picked from your home, so you don't have to carry it and get tired. So we were thinking, how do we do this? We know that there is a very famous selling site in Sweden called Blocket, and we checked how much is the price to post something. We saw, ok, the price is almost 20 percent of the total value of that we were trying to sell, oh my god, it would take time... and wait for people to actu-ally see this. So why don't we try social media, maybe it works in that way. And I happened to, very accidentally find a group, a private group with a huge number of people, in the private group, who were selling and buying things in the same city, so I said I'm going to become a member and of course a person had to approve me to be part of that network, so she accepted me because I explained myself and what I'm going to do. I just took some pictures of these furnitures that we were trying to sell, and I posted them on that Facebook group. So I was personally in a way, like, try to avoid someone knows what I'm trying to sell, but still, they were, yeah, I have some friend who were apparently part of the network, and actually a friend bought one of the things, so I met her in the office two days ago, but if I never post it she will never know I was selling staff. So, yeah, she bought this. And then a lot of people said "yeah, I want to buy this and I want to buy that". But even I choose the buyer, to be honest, because there were so many people want to buy these staff, so we finally chose someone who wanted to buy everything, because it was easier to coordinate one by one. That's why we just wrote a description that if you buy all of them, we will choose you, in a way. So we got this guy buying these staff, he came and pick it up, and we were all free. And I couldn't believe it, I said we have to just find a way to try to transport these things or throw themselves, and I was thinking how are we going to carry them, but then these guys bought all of it and they carried by themselves, because that's how it work here, so we were very happy with this solution and anytime I will be selling again, I will definitely first go through Facebook, and find these groups of course.	TA RW SF
15	Alla	How did you make a decision to sell things on Facebook? Can you de-scribe more?	
16	RP6	The first thing that came to my mind that going to Facebook was because I used Facebook much longer than Instagram, and because of the long give it to you have been using Facebook, my network was pretty huge, I said 500 plus which doesn't mean huge to someone, but for me it is. I knew for Facebook there are these private groups, so there are private events, things happening in Facebook. You can join these, and I knew that these were going on, but I wasn't aware how it was really going work until I said I'm going to explore it and see how does it work, so I found this group under the name of city I'm living, which said was selling and buying staff, from that particular community, and I said this is the right thing I wanted to do. I found that transaction is possible in Facebook. But if I think of Instagram, it never came to my mind, because first of all, my Instagram network is very small, and none of the friends of people I have in my Instagram have shared something in that sense, oh, I'm selling this one, do you want to buy or something. I never saw it something like that. While on Facebook, you could come across such things. And Facebook is more huge, and Instagram quite be limited. For LinkedIn, it's for more professional things, all work life not for private life, and I barely used	FL

		Google+ and others, that's why I choose Facebook as the first choice.	
17	Alla	Have you ever sold your products/ services in some other ways?	
18	RP6	Blocket.	
19	Alla	In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using Facebook for selling (in comparison to other ways)?	
20	RP6	On Facebook, what is also nice, that you can actually see the network of these people. I can actually check who are those people, you might assume ok, they look like more students, and students, if you posted something in August, you know the upcoming students who just joined the group, are actually interesting in buying. So the younger you are, in terms of joining the club, the better you have chance to sell something, because it looks like people joining for a reason, and if they have been being here for a very long time, so they don't being... quit being a part of that network, they are just interested in what people are selling, so maybe they will buy something. If I assume myself as a young student, and I'm starting to study, now I need furniture or whatever, because I need things to buy, so this is a huge benefit on Facebook, gives more visibility, to who properly will be the seller, who will be the buyer, much more visibility, you actually get in touch with person in a much different way compared to Blocket. On Blocket, if you posted your email, or you can post your phone number, but until [meeting the buyer] you can only talk to the person, but you can't visualise that person, it's more anonymous. While on Facebook, you have more close in this, there was the people who will either buy or sell you staff, which we feel nicer, I don't know. And also on Facebook, what is a very-very nice, people can [see] it's the pricing, so you first think a price, and then people can start to either bargaining, or changing your price. They will say, can I buy this staff for 100 kronor lesser, ten percent lesser, whatever, someone would say I will buy this for the full price, so pick me, if they are interested in it. But on Blocket, you will never do this, because they don't have visibility at all. They are just people [who] can call you or email you, and you can tell one of the potential buyers, oh, no no no, I don't want to sell to you, because I got another buyer who told me another price. And I have used Blocket to buy things, and I always found that the seller is trying to lie to me that they had a better offer from someone, from another buyer, so if I would ask them, if the original price is 1000, I asked them if I come to pick these things by 800 [kronor], they would say they are not interested because they got another buyer who will buy it for the same price. You just feel they are lying, because that's very invisible, and at the same time, they know that ok, because they would wait for until someone come and say I will buy for actual price. What you can notice sometimes on Blocket is that the same product was not sold, because the person was trying to sell as a original price, and everyone was asking for a discount. So maybe after two weeks or a month, the things were not sold, then you can see the price went down. so it takes three weeks but sometimes you want to buy or sell something immediately, you don't have time to wait. On Facebook, it's completely different story, because people are posting properly, I will buy for this much, other person would say no no, wait, don't give it for that low price, I will buy for the full price, it's visible, it's there, the conversation is there, so the pricing system how it is regulated I like it much better on Facebook, because it brings visibility.	RW
21	Alla	Do you find that usage of Facebook helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?	
22	RP6	Yes, it does, because on Facebook, you saved your time talk to people on the phone. Because people are there, whenever you have time, you go and check your Facebook, the page where you posted your conversation. Once you decided with whom, you can comment on that and have a private email to chat with that person, then exchange phone numbers and address, this is the best thing I think. You don't have to share where you live, your mobile numbers in the beginning. At the same time, it is giving you visibility, but also previously, you know, it sounds very controversial, but it gives you visibility in terms of who will be the actual buyers, because those buyers are actually competing themselves on your own	RW

		page, on your products, and at the same time you gives so much previously, although they can see a picture, and maybe little information, depending on how you want to place yourself on Facebook you can have it, hidden or unhidden, it depends on how you post your profile. But no phone number, no address, nothing, you don't have to tell these things until the moment actually comes to for the buyer to come and see you. So visibility but private at the same time.	
23	Alla	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buyers?	
24	RP6	Yes, exactly.	
25	Alla	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?	
26	RP6	Yes, definitely, because for us, my partner will be more interested to sell them on that day, because it took like a weekend over and then on Monday that the person was coming and picked the things up. So I said to him that what about tomorrow or even today, and then he said: no, I can't because I'm travelling on my way and so on, so I just had an understanding of this. That's why I also kept my responses to other possible buyers, until this actual thing happened, in a way I just trusted this person, because he didn't seem fail in a way just responding for me. It was a kind of trusting in a way, with these messaging, I just felt yeah, the person was travelling, I understand him, and I can wait until Monday, so I wait until Monday, until this happened.	
27	Alla	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?	
28	RP6	So, if I have a few buyers, I noticed that it was very important to say that of course those who want to pay for the full price would be chosen. So you, kind of, tell the people that if you are asking for half of the price or the lower price, and you are the first one, you don't have to be first come first serve. But you just say, I will, of course, the more convenient for me, so if the first buyer coming and saying: can you give me 20 percent discount, maybe, in 20 minutes later, I got the second buyer who said I can buy it for the full price, and of course, I was more interested in that, and said, I will go for the second buyer. So I didn't feel bad that it wasn't feature of first come first serve, but it was convenient for me.	
29	Alla	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?	
30	RP6	As soon as you feel that I made a deal, I can go on with this person, because I like the pricing, the first thing I could do, because you are in the network already, is actually writing an email, and say hey, I see you are interested, would you like to get in touch with. We fix a day when you want to pick this, and then the person responds, and if the person responds that, yeah, it's my phone number, if you can call me or I'll coming on these days or that days, it just feels that I have to trust person, then I definitely go to their profile, I want to check with this person, and I saw that this person just moved to the city, this probably safe enough. And in a way, it was two days after that the person was coming and pick the staff, so I just had feeling that I had to trust that person, because of the way how we communicate by the email, and how was his profile look like. And also since I wouldn't respond the buyers immediately, I would keep my response to them away, I wouldn't say, oh, they were sold, because the person picked them up, I wrote to the rest [persons that things were] sold. In a way, you choose who you want to sell to.	TT
31	Alla	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on Facebook?	
32	RP6	It's true, I was feeling very satisfied, to be honest. I said I never got this satisfaction from Blocket. Although I tried several times, but it never worked for me. I just feel very disappointed with Blocket, so if I need to sell things again, for the second hand things, I will do the same, choose Facebook.	
33	Alla	Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, you share product's general description such as its color, size.	

34	RP6	Yeah, definitely. Especially on information sharing level, because normally, as I noticed that on social network you would most sell second-hand products, there are a couple of first hand products and new products, but most of people tend to sell second-hand products here. And for me, it's important that the person maybe tell that how long these products have been used, whether the colour has been gone, you know, just know as much as possible, because the buyer will come and see these staff and a few minutes later can decide not to pick these staff, right? It's their choice, they didn't give money, they can come and see first, that's how it actually works, so I wanted to be as honest as possible, I showed the pictures without editing it, because you know you can edit the picture and made all the colours perfect, but the person is not stupid, because the person will come and see it. So, on the information sharing level, I was really trying to describe it, what condition each product has. Like, a table which was fairly new, in a way, although it was used for six years, I said I don't have children at home to scratch it or make marks on it, so it was pretty new. And the coach was worn off more, because the colour was kind of gone, it looks more like used material, yeah, and I had to clean that, because I want the person come and buy them not showed that they are not interesting buy it because it was very old, because then it would cause me trouble, because I was so interested to sell it, I wanted it out with me. So on that level, I really-really like when people give me enough, more information of whatever the condition of the product is, so that you are aware, and not see actually and not very disappointed.	IS
35	Alla	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).	
36	RP6	Yeah, exactly, it didn't really happen in my case, but I see that if someone is selling a more complicated product, let's say, a complicated device that people don't really know how to use it, then people can actually explain to you how to use it, how differences from other devices, then I also feel more content with that, so now I understand the person is actually sharing an experience that how to actually use this product, it should make you want to buy it, but if the product actually requires some knowledge around it and you only give information about that, it would be, oh no no, I am not interesting in it because I want to know details not just of description level, but if I don't see that, why should I buy it, so it depends on the type of the product, but they are definitely certain products that you must make sure that you can see how you can make use of it. And for the experience of a seller, it definitely to be share, otherwise, I don't think they can get enough interesting people buying the product, so I said it should be a technological device. And we have one case, for instance, of buying a camera, I looked at those, and I never bought one, but I actually went to Facebook pages, to check how people sell camera, lenses, because I said earlier, I'm interested in photography, and I said, oh, maybe I can buy a second-hand lens, because those seem to be very costly at times. So a person would actually come up a video message, saying, oh, this is how you can use it, they would turn the screen on where you actually see the features and say, you can open the aperture this much and that much, and, you know, change the lighting and this is the effect it will give you. So they were actually sharing this experience of them using that particular lens. And by the end of the video they might also say, I'm selling this not because it is not good, but because I'm a professional photographer. I want to buy even more advanced one which costs… So in that sense that person would convince me more to buy the product comparing to someone just posting the picture of a lens and saying: this is a Canon, 50mm and you can take good portraits with it. Without actually telling how does it work and how the features of it, I won't be convinced.	KS
37	Alla	Previously, you did not consider your network when you were selling. Would you consider it next time when you sell it on FB?	
38	RP6	Honestly, no, not my own network again, that is because most of the things I would sell, probably, will be physical bound as well, so if I think of	NW

		my network right now, it is most people spreaded around the world. Maybe only 10% or 15% of them are where I live or actually very few, right now where I live very few of them are my FB network. Because I just moved not even a year ago. So I can add some friends here and there, but it is very-very-very few, so if I would sell something, I see that it would be no point whatsoever to announce it to my network. Because people are 2000, 10000 km away from me and for sure they will find this unnecessary information. So I would have to go through a network, selling network, private network possibly of a city there I live. Because I would not the delivery and so on.	
39	Alla	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (That means from this activity, you have more acquaintances) Then we would assume that you are not interested in expanding your network through the selling activity.	
40	RP6	That's true. No, I would not really make… Maybe I could make an acquaintance with someone that sold me something or I bought something from but if the conversation was only… to go to their home to pick that stuff and to say thank you, no. But if I happen to get into discussion like: hey, what do you work for, or you accidentally happen to know the same person… things like that, then you might say, hey, let's keep in touch, right? And if you say, let's keep in touch, the first thing that comes to you, it is just keeping in touch and not so close, not so privately, is oh do you have FB. And this is how I would add this person. But if I would just go and without any discussion just say, thank you and there is the money, and I take the product and leave, I would not expand network with those people.	
41	Alla	What influences/ motivates you most to sell on Facebook?	
42	RP6	What influences me most, was a friend of mine who used FB to sell things. I said earlier that I saw these things myself but then I also saw a person sitting next to me or a friend of mine, who actually told me about how cool this is and how easy it is. So in a way I got two influences. But at the same time I knew about these groups all over the places on FB that you would join and I said, yeah, I would give it a try too. And I actually had this first time experience with someone who was using it a lot. So that made me also think that I can do this. And at the same time I had to see that it can actually happen, which means that a friend liked a page on FB, which was "selling and buying". And I said: ok, my friend like this page "selling and buying" in this city, aha, ok. I got it to my head so when the time came I remembered that moment. I said, oh, yes, there is a possibility, so I go through other services, when you actually have this opportunity. So, it is sort to say first-hand experience and easiness. Yes, exactly.	RW
43	Alla	Is there anything more you would like to add in terms of what stimulate you to sell things?	
44	RP6	I am not sure. I have a feeling I covered a lot of things. I am talking a lot. So I don't think I have to add anything right now.	

Appendix 8 – Interview transcript with Respondent 7 (RP7)

Date: 28th, April 2016
Present: Alla Volkovynska and Respondent 7 (RP7)
Interview format: Skype video call
Interview duration: 49 minutes 51 seconds
Transcribed by: Alla Volkovynska
Transcription date: 8th, May 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Alla	Do you use any of social networks? What kind of platform do you use for social interaction?	
2	RP7	I am registered at FB, VK, Odnoklassniki, Twitter, Google+. I'm registered but in reality, right now I use FB on the first place, VK is on the second place, Twitter rarely, Odnoklassniki I almost don't use at all. I even wrote there that ушла в луга [disappeared]. Google+ exists and is used when communicating with colleagues from other countries because its email is more convenient for them.	
3	Alla	How much time do you use to spend on (name of the platform)?	
4	RP7	In reality since I have iPhone, all of these networks are installed there. And to be honest, they are used at a message level. You receive a notification if someone writes to you and you answer this message because it is in your phone and you don't have need to open laptop or something else. But as an information break at work 5-10 mins, most likely 5 when you eat, it feels that the brain had some rest. You open the network, FB most likely, since first of all there are groups connected to the work, there can be discussed some question, which are interesting from the professional point of view. And also it is convenient to keep track on the news there, you went through it quickly and you know what is happening. In general, if you track then it is probably much time spent, but it does not feel like that. Though in reality, all the time, I think. You went through the news, read them, marked something and continued working.	
5	Alla	Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times?	
6	RP7	If you take into account that people were asking me to make them a specific set of gingerbread… They saw my works on FB. If we count it as usage of social networks, then, yes, I sold. Since I posted, figuratively speaking, a set that I baked, but honestly speaking I have a low level of orders. Officially I made 3 orders for the moment. Basically I made them for friends. The first order, I brought gingerbread to congratulate the girls from the volleyball team with the 8th of March. I brought and one girl like them a lot. She asked to make a set for her daughter's birthday. So, I made the set for the birthday, posted on FB and then another mother of a little girl said: oh, I want the same, the birthday is tomorrow, can you, please, do it. I made it, and then one more girl saw my works and asked to make [a set] for her professional activity. She is engaged in a children's club. She asked to make [a set] for the birthday of a boy, whom I did not know. Generally speaking, all these people were on FB, and they have seen all these work through FB, well two of them [since] one person saw my works at [volleyball] training. And some people wrote on FB: oh cool, when I'm up to it, I'll order you; if it is possible to order, I'll make an order in the future.	

7	Alla	In other words, through FB, it sells better than VK?	
8	RP7	I lost the thrill of using VK in general. Earlier VK was in priority, I did not understand FB, did not understand its news… I posted albums on VK, communicated there basically, but now, it seems that it has spam, too many advertisements. And somehow it often cracks. It is used only for music [now]. There is a good music selection, I use it more likely as audio track. There is also a certain group, such as volleyball team, which is for communication. I post there, but, to be honest, there are less "likes" and these photos are less in demand. On FB reaction is more active on such posts, it feels that, yes, I am so cool, there are so many comments. You post in VK and it passes somehow quietly, some "likes" and that is it. In reality I was collecting and collecting and recently, a month ago, I created an album. I collected more than 10 different examples. They all were created for relatives and friends. They just were different. I thought [about it] after first order, when the girl said that she liked [one of sets] and she wanted [a set]. I decided to create an album so that not only her [but others] could order. So, I did it, posted so that people looked at it, looked at what could be done. I had written that any idea could be embodied.	
9	Alla	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on Facebook/ VKontakte?	
10	RP7	The first order happened after the 8th of March, on the 23rd of March there was a birthday. The second order happened literary in 3 days after I posted [photo]. It was also birthday, either the end of March or the beginning of April. I received one more order approximately a week or a week and a half ago. They all happened to be urgent. I have four orders for May. 3 of them are from a master who makes my nails […] and one more order was placed on FB, but it is for my relative […]. So FB works. Yes, I'm telling you, the higher activity level is on FB. And, by the way, also Instagram. I also use Instagram and post [photos of gingerbread sets] there and there I also have one more arrangement.	
11	Alla	How did you make a decision to sell things on Facebook/ VKontakte? Can you describe more?	
12	RP7	How it all began. I had a friend on FB […], she posted on FB her works [gingerbreads]. I admired it. Everybody was asking her for a master class and she agreed. I opened FB, saw it and managed to sign up for her first master class. The master class happened the 1st of July last year. We made a set called "Love", we had been making it for 10 hours […]. But 10 hours just for one set… I realized that most likely no [it does not work for me]. In August I moved in a new apartment. Previously, 6 days a week I was occupied by different leisure activities. The all were paid for and I could not afford them anymore [because of apartment fee]. I was coming home to an empty apartment and I had lots of free time. A huge amount of free time made me to remember "hand-made" gingerbread. There was a group on FB created by those who participated in master class. They [participants] shared their works, questions. At the beginning, I wanted to share my works in this closed group, what works out fine what not so fine. I see that people like it. I looked at other works and saw that there were those who were working much better than me but there also were those who were doing it worth. In comparison, I realized that there was much to develop.	TA
13	Alla	Have you ever sold your products/ services in some other ways?	
14	RP7	On FB I, probably, have the biggest friend list. I have around 447-450 people, friend, half friend, acquaintances, teachers on FB. So there is an information pool, I show [photo] to min 450 people depending on who of them used and could see it. They can also tell to someone else. VK the friend list is smaller, approximately 300, because I don't have my foreign friends there. On Instagram, maybe, around 250 subscribers. So it is less and less of friends. That is why on FB such reaction is the highest. Is it just because of the number of friends? I don't know. Maybe, my friends are using FB more actively. Since 70% of my friend lists consists of the same people, but I receive "likes" on FB and not on VK. Probably,	NW

		FB has specific system, when, for instance, you posted some news to-day, people "liked" it, let's say 50 "likes". Then suddenly somebody puts 51st "like" in a week and then it starts all over again, because this news comes up again. Those who have not seen it, who have missed it, can see it. So this system of putting the news up if someone commented on it or "liked" it…
		Someone reposted my [works], I didn't even ask them. After I posted my album 4 people reposted it by themselves. To be honest, I'm against ads. I love social networks, it was so cool when they just appeared because you could see how a person lived, could communicate with him/ her, could see the news, everything… but when everybody started to use it as his/ her own advertisement place… I, to be honest, left VK because of it. It became too much of advertisement. The adds on Instagram are so annoying. I don't like to trash my profile with ads. I posted information, those who are interested can contact me, I'm open to it. If there is such possibility, then I make it [a set of gingerbread]. But I don't like those kind of things: I'm such a master bla-bla-bla…
15	Alla	Do you find that usage of Facebook/ VKontakte helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?
16	RP7	I am not overloaded with the sales. But I am open for collaboration. My former classmate showed on Instagram that she started to bake. I saw it and suggested to put my little cake on top of hers (I saw this somewhere else). And so they put a photo of my cakes as a decoration suggestion. We agreed that if there'll be an order then I will help. I don't consider myself such a professional to take money for this.
17	Alla	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buy-ers?
18	RP7	Right now I have 4 orders in line, one is on FB.
19	Alla	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?
20	RP7	I warn them [buyers] that something may not come out right. One thing if it is a work which I did previously, another if it is something new, will it come out well. That's why I warn them honestly. Do they accept this information with understanding? Yes, it suits everyone. Everyone under-stands.
21	Alla	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ ser-vice, how do you choose whom to sell?
22	RP7	This situation is unlikely because I never work in advance, I do for a specific buyer. I don't have just available cakes. When I make a cake I always think of someone and that's a beauty of it. If the situation would appear anyway, I would make a second set. I would discuss, who could wait, maybe divided in two. I would look at the conditions.
23	Alla	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?
24	RP7	Meanwhile I work as a delivery person, it's a bonus. First of all, people who write to me are in my friends list. It's a first level of trust to people. Until anything else happens I will trust a person. And people who wrote to me did not disappoint me. Even if I did work with them, did not see them. If I had negative experience, then I would not do it again. But initially, until anything else, I trust 100%.
25	Alla	Do you feel a sense of belonging to Facebook/ VKontakte? How often do you use this kind of platform?
26	RP7	All the people whom I have on FB are also on VK and Instagram. I sang with them in a chore, learned English, went surfing. And on what platform I do it… I can't talk to the same person in 3 different places. So is the platform important? It is not. Somehow I've gone over to FB, I guess I understand it more, also more international friends there. I got used to it, the FB, meanwhile VK has some much ads now.
27	Alla	Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?

28	RP7	I really don't like new registrations. I'm all against. I felt tensed when FB first appeared. Because when VK came I thought why? There is already Odnoklassniki. Then, Odnoklassniki started to be dull and VK felt like heaven. I feel irritated when the information in replicated. When you put something on Instagram and then it's duplicated on Twitter, FB, VK. I use them all myself but they are not so private to me. To be honest, it's irritating when you read same information three times. Then you get used to it and start ignoring it. A kind of protective mechanism.	
29	Alla	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on Facebook/ VKontakte?	
30	RP7	For me it's totally new experience, a quite unpredicted turn. I never thought I could do it, right until the sale. I get satisfaction when I know that the cakes have been presented and the birthday child was happy and ate them all. The most satisfaction is when someone is happy.	SF
31	Alla	Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, you share product's general description such as its color, size.	
32	RP7	The information exchange is that other people know that I'm not only a pharmacist but also I can bake. The fact that I share it is what I think is a new information. And someone will repost, someone will tell. If there will be orders I would say it stimulated me. Yet, the information exchange has been only between relatives.	
33	Alla	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).	
34	RP7	Knowledge sharing is very good on FB because I am subscribed to all the masters. There is a closed group where the girls are answering questions honestly. They go to master-class which costs a lot of money, they share photos and videos from there. And explain how this is done. So I can get it for free. If I would be wise I would use it.	KS
35	Alla	How often do you post/share such kind of news/information/knowledge?	
36	RP7	If someone asks me then yes. We, masters, share between each other, ask questions, socialise. Even help each other. Once someone needed icing for an order which took place in 5-days, I could help with 2 packages. Someone needs forms – someone can help. So there is an exchange, now only knowledge sharing but also actual help. Once some girl bought packaging boxes for everybody.	
37	Alla	When you chose Facebook/ VKontakte for selling purposes, have you considered your network?	
38	RP7	Primarily – friends circle. They share, they make orders.	NW
39	Alla	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (That means from this activity, you have more acquaintances)	
40	RP7	Yes. A girl who made an order, she added me as a friend.	
41	Alla	What influences/ motivates you most to sell on Facebook/ VKontakte?	
42	RP7	I did not have goal to sell. I have done two same albums in VK, and put them on both VK and FB. Because there are friends with are not on both social networks. But on FB the response was bigger. So I didn't choose FB specifically, if someone replies me on Instagram I will do it there, if it will be on VK then there too. The information is open. Because right now, except for volleyball and manicure master people wrote me only on FB, there is more activity there. Nothing can stimulate me because I'm not a sales person. I do it for my pleasure. It is fast to upload photos on those sites. It is fast to write text. Absolutely no difference. Because this is not a dedicated sales site. Just the response on FB is bigger than in VK. The difference is that nowadays people react more actively on FB. Why? Maybe because of a news reporting or on how the information is presented. Maybe because of the repetition or the amount of friends, since	UB

| | | it's an international platform. This is a question to FB, I cannot tell. But today I get 3 orders thanks to FB, which made it work! If you think about it these are the elements of a system, all these likes, news, internationalization people see what other friends are doing, I guess it all helps. | |

Appendix 9 – Interview transcript with Respondent 8 (RP8)

Date: 28th, April 2016
Present: Ning Bao (Ning) and Respondent 8 (RP8)
Interview format: WeChat video call
Interview duration: 23 minutes 18 seconds
Transcribed by: Ning Bao
Transcription date: 29th, April 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Ning	Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times? If yes: Which one?	
2	RP8	Multiple times used WeChat to sell things.	
3	Ning	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on WeChat?	
4	RP8	First time, when I used WeChat to post the information about products, the buyers were asking for the detailed information about those products. When the buyers felt interesting in these products, they would go to my physical store to take a look at these products, then they bought it. As we are in the same city, so they went to my store and bought it, with face-to-face transaction.	
5	Ning	How did you make a decision to sell things on WeChat? Can you describe more?	
6	RP8	It was an unintentional behaviour. I posted the photos of the products which I used by myself on WeChat, when my friends saw these photos, they asked me the information of these product, then they bought it. After that, I found it's a way to sell things through WeChat.	NW
7	Ning	Have you ever sold your products/ services in some other ways?	
8	RP8	As there are lots of people who still have doubt in trustworthiness of WeChat, I operate a physical store. Hence, the buyers can have both options to look through the products on WeChat and at the store. In addition to that, I have one selling experience on Taobao, but I don't like Taobao, because there are so many fake things in Taobao, so I still want to use WeChat, especially used the functionality of "Circle of Friends" (to sell things).	TT
9	Ning	In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using WeChat for selling (in comparison to other ways)?	
10	RP8	Emotional gratification. I feel very successful on that. There are a lot of people don't know me before, they added me to my friends on WeChat as they introduced by their own friends who have already used my products, so they trusted me so that I feel very gratification.	NW
11	Ning	Do you find that usage of WeChat helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?	
12	RP8	Of course, greatly helped me to save time and put less efforts. Especially for the buyers from other cities, they bought the products in my physical store for the first time, and when they want to buy again, they just used WeChat to inform me and we can complete the transaction activity online. It saves my time a lot and the buyer's time, and saved the time for conversation in my store. The buyers who has the first buying experience	RW

		will follow the product's information which I posted, and then buy it if they like the products.	
13	Ning	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buyers?	
14	RP8	I got information about the feedback of products from buyers. The feedback are such as, the deficiency of the products, the buyers asked for more products' information, the buyers want to know if there are any other similar products. They gave me a lot suggestions and reminding. It's very benefit to me.	IST
15	Ning	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?	
16	RP8	Absolutely, the buyers can very understanding to me.	
17	Ning	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?	
18	RP8	First come first serve. But normally, I introduced the similar products to the buyers who cannot get the previous product, in order to satisfy them. They can accept other similar alternatives, because they trusted me. Also a lot of customers accept to wait for the next time when I have the same products that they ordered. As long as you have no fake products, the buyers would trust me and trust my other suggestions.	TT
19	Ning	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?	
20	RP8	Most of my customers paid money in advance, then I sent the products to them. Additionally, I cooperated with the post company. If the buyers did not pay money when the products were delivering, I would contact the postman to transfer or stop their sending. But this kind of situation never happened to me. The buyers trust me and I trust the buyers, besides I have the physical store and combine using WeChat to sell things, so the buyers can more trust me.	
21	Ning	Do you feel a sense of belonging to WeChat? How often do you use this kind of platform?	
22	RP8	Yes. I always use WeChat and keep online, in order to know if the customers have some questions sent to me. Especially after I go home in the evening, I always take a look at WeChat (The circle of Friends). And I need always post the new information about new products by WeChat, so I feel strong belonging to WeChat. Especially after I posted the new information of new products, some customers will go to my physical store on next day, or some of customers who lived in other cities will order products through WeChat, So I need to check their notifications or messages through WeChat, so I need to use it very often. However, when I was busy in my physical store, I did not have time to use WeChat.	CM
23	Ning	Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?	
24	RP8	If the other platform can be very convenient and easy to be used, especially with a high security (Confidentiality). If it can be with high security and reliability, I will choose other platforms. Because I feel WeChat is not with enough security, I had some problems about that few days ago, hence I need to change my password very often. When you have a lot of transactions on WeChat, there will be some security problems with the account. For example, a few days ago, my account was often automatically offline. So if there is a platform with high security and more convenience and easy to be used, I will choose it.	CN SR CT
25	Ning	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on WeChat?	
26	RP8	I am very satisfied with WeChat, except the security problem.	SR
27	Ning	Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, you share product's general description such as its color, size.	
28	RP8	Yes. It's very important.	IS
29	Ning	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity?	

		For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).	
30	RP8	Yes, there should be support and it's very important. I posted the knowledge related to my products, for example, how to use it.	KS
31	Ning	How often do you post/share such kind of news/information/knowledge?	
32	RP8	When I got the information or document about the products, I would post all information I have.	IS
33	Ning	When you chose Facebook WeChat for selling purposes, have you considered your network?	
34	RP8	Yes, I have considered my network. In the beginning, when I used WeChat to post the information about the products, I only considered about my circle of friends and relatives. But after I have done these kind of selling things for a long time, I found my network was expanding, then I considered that I should create a specific account only for selling. But now I cannot modify the account, but considering a long-term plan, I have to create a new account that focuses on only selling and provides information for the customers. Because I have lots of friends and relatives who will feel boring about so many information about the products.	CT
35	Ning	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (That means from this activity, you have more acquaintances)	
36	RP8	Yes, of course. It lets me know a lot people, and we are now very good friends. They are my customer and also my good friends.	
37	Ning	What influences/ motivates you most to sell on Wechat?	
38	RP8	I feel it's a very good way to combine using WeChat and selling products through physical store. WeChat helps me a lot for selling.	
39	Ning	Is there anything more you would like to add in terms of what stimulate you to sell things?	
40	RP8	No.	

Appendix 10 – Interview transcript with Respondent 9 (RP9)

Date: 28th, April 2016
Present: Ning Bao (Ning) and Respondent 9 (RP9)
Interview format: WeChat video call
Interview duration: 37 minutes 11 seconds
Transcribed by: Ning Bao
Transcription date: 29th, April 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Ning	Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times?	
2	RP9	Yes. Many times.	
3	Ning	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on WeChat?	
4	RP9	I cannot remember exactly. It's about posting products' information through "circle of friends" on WeChat. The buyer wanted to buy the product and chatted to me about detailed information, and then the buyer paid money (transferred money to my account), meantime, I sent the product to the buyer.	
5	Ning	May I ask what's the difference of paying between WeChat and Taobao?	
6	RP9	They are not the same. For WeChat, it's a kind of oral-contract, and there are two ways, one is called "First-product", the other is called "First-money". "First-money" refers to the buyer paid money to me firstly, when I received the money, I would send product to the buyer's post address. The big difference of Taobao, is that Taobao has its own paying platform called "ZhiFuBao". When the buyers used Taobao to buy things from me, they normally saved the product's link and then paid money to "ZhiFuBao", which means the money is taken charge by the 3rd party, and after the buyers received the products and confirmed that they already received the products, I can get the money from the 3rd party - "ZhiFuBao". So there is no 3rd party to control the money when using WeChat, it totally depends on the trust between buyers and sellers.	TT
7	Ning	How did you make a decision to sell things on WeChat? Can you describe more?	
8	RP9	There is a simple reason to choose WeChat, because WeChat is the most successful and mature social network in China. And there are a lot of users using WeChat. As you know, in the beginning, the main function you used WeChat is to contact with your friends, relatives and classmates, as by telephone number, we can add friends on WeChat. So the prerequisite for choosing WeChat is that the customers acquisition is stable, and we know the potential customers, that's the first reason I used WeChat. Additionally, there are a lot of functionalities on WeChat, including chatting group, and then my friends helped me to recommend my products to their friends, so that their friends can buy things from me. Meanwhile, we have a lot of communication group, it contains a large coverage, then the transaction on WeChat is more mature, basically, when I have the new products, I can use WeChat to post announcement at the first time, then the buyers would know more about my new products. So it is very fast and easy to be used.	NW UB
9	Ning	Have you ever sold your products/ services in some other ways?	

10	RP9	Taobao.	
11	Ning	In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using WeChat for selling (in comparison to other ways)?	
12	RP9	I can know a lot of people and make a lot of friends by WeChat. It lets others trust me deeply and it can promote my reputation.	TT RW
13	Ning	Do you find that usage of WeChat helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?	
14	RP9	Yes, yes.	RW
15	Ning	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buyers?	
16	RP9	Yes, it's very fast as WeChat is a kind of instant message tool. The feedback of the products from buyers is very fast.	IST
17	Ning	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?	
18	RP9	Yes, it often happened. Since there are a lot of things we can not control, so if I delayed sending products for one or two days, the buyers can understand me. However, when the buyers hoped to receive the products as soon as possible, I can also understand them. I will do my service very good and quickly based on the buyers' requirements.	EST
19	Ning	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?	
20	RP9	I will sell the products who contacts me first or who paid money to me first. In my opinion, reputation is the most important for selling things. Even though the second or third coming buyers may pay more money, I will still sell the product to the first person who contacted me first or paid firstly, because we have already made a deal, I must follow my word. I think payment is a prerequisite for the establishment of the transaction.	RW
21	Ning	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?	
22	RP9	To be honest, sellers cannot ensure the trust of buyers. It should be that the buyers need to ensure trustworthiness of the sellers.	
23	Ning	Do you feel a sense of belonging to WeChat? How often do you use this kind of platform?	
24	RP9	I don't know if I can say it as a belonging. But I would say I cannot leave the WeChat and Taobao platforms. If I did not see the circle of friends on WeChat for a while, I would feel uncomfortable. I feel strong relying on WeChat.	CM
25	Ning	Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?	
26	RP9	It depends on the functionalities of the other platforms. For example, Weibo is very similar to Facebook, it is more open if compared to WeChat. For Weibo, you do not need to add friends, lots of people can see your posting by forwarding the posting. Since I seldom used Weibo, I felt it was a bit messy and not so focused on one thing. But I also considered perhaps in the future I will think about usage of Weibo, Facebook and other platforms. It depends on the numbers of users of other platforms, if there are a lot people using other platforms, like WeChat now, if nearly everyone uses one social network, I have to change to this platform.	NW
27	Ning	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on WeChat?	
28	RP9	When I used WeChat to sell things, I felt that I only focused on my own friends. It was highly targeting, but the extending was not wide enough. It depends on the numbers of your friends, more or less, the source of the friends is a big problem. In this aspect, I feel that Facebook is better than WeChat, as Facebook includes a strong extension. If you posted a very good topic or a very good product on Facebook, it is easily forwarded and liked or seen by many other people. However, it is totally different to WeChat, it depends a lot on your own friends, as your friends need to help you to recommend or forward the product's information, they need	NW CT

		to help you to send to their friends, and then it's only point to point, which I think is the limitation of using WeChat. And for one WeChat account, there is a limitation to add friends, like you can only add 2000 or 3000 friends, then you can not add more friends. So I think the big problem for selling on WeChat is the number of buyers is limited by the maximum numbers of friends. Moreover, I think WeChat is just a social network software, the functionality of transaction is explored by the individual users, which is only one of aspect of WeChat's social functionalities. The big difference between WeChat and Taobao is that Taobao is professional on transaction, for creating online store. So Taobao is faced to the whole society, to all persons who have laptops and smartphones, they can use Taobao to find my online store. For WeChat, it can help me to let my friends know the information of my new products, but it can not directly to promote the transactions in the first time. At the same time, I need to update the new products information on my Taobao online store, in order to let more people follow (like) my products. But there is also some requirements from Taobao, you must continue to grow more maturely, you must promote the level of your online store, in order to let more people follow you and like you. Otherwise, the buyers can not search you online store if you owned a very small store. So in the initial phase, you need to use social network platform to attract and acquire more buyers, then to help you to promote the level of online store on Taobao. So I think we should combine using each platform together, it's difficult to only rely on one platform, only using WeChat can not solve all my problems, it should use multiple platforms together to solve the problem.	
29	Ning	Have you considered using Private Public Account on WeChat?	
30	RP9	Yes, it's a very good new functionality of WeChat. I also followed some private public account, but I have not such account, thank you very much for reminding me. Most of private public account which I followed are not selling things directly, they are more focus on posting some information and notification, such as some small forums, to let more people join in the discussion on some topics, to promote their following users and their reputations.	KS RW
31	Ning	Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, you share product's general description such as its color, size.	
32	RP9	Yes. I shared more information by using the functionality called "circle of friends" on WeChat.	
33	Ning	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).	
34	RP9	Yes. Although these knowledge sharing can not promote the transaction directly, it seems like a kind or advertisement to announce your products' information. These advertisements is for promotion, a rational promotion is very necessary.	
35	Ning	How often do you post/share such kind of news/information/knowledge?	
36	RP9	I posted 3-5 messages on the circle of friends on WeChat per day. Most of messages are about my products' information, less of them are about knowledge, such as my living experience and expertise sharing.	IS
37	Ning	When you chose WeChat for selling purposes, have you considered your network?	
38	RP9	Yes, I have considered it. In the beginning, I was thinking about how to expand my network. I asked my closed friends to help me forward my WeChat account and QR code, in order to attract more people to add my account to their friends, then the potential buyers can contact me directly. It is what I am still doing. To continue expand my network and friends, meantime, by using the "groups" to add others and let others to add to my account. For the positive aspect, it somehow affects and promotes the selling, as it	CT

		increased the amount of customers and promote the transaction, there are new friends adding me, and after transaction, we became friends. For the negative aspect, there are some of my friends in my previous circle who are not interested in the products and can feel bored and annoyed. But after all, there are more positive affection than negative affection.	
39	Ning	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (That means from this activity, you have more acquaintances)	
40	RP9	Yes, of course. I know a lot of people including my customers and counterparts.	
41	Ning	What influences/ motivates you most to sell on Wechat?	
42	RP9	There is one aspect I did not mention. What I mentioned above, such as convenient, directly, instant (no delay), with high efficient and one more thing is the cost is very low. It saved money, and it costs relatively less in economic aspect.	CN RW
43	Ning	Is there anything more you would like to add in terms of what stimulate you to sell things?	
44	RP9	What I want to share is more focus on individual factor and industry factor. I think the most problem for these platforms is human factor, it is not only the factor of platform per se, because no matter what platform you use, in the end, it depends on the communication between human beings, which I think is the most important. For the communication between human beings, trustworthiness is the first place for me, the disputes seldom happened to me, but it can not avoid dispute on any platform. As long as there is commercial trading there will exist disputes. Disputes can not be solved if it happened through the transactions on WeChat. Because WeChat is just a social network platform, you can only solve the problem of disputing by communicating or other ways. But for Taobao, there are some mechanisms help you to solve disputes. These mechanisms also can affect the level promotion of buyers and sellers. By using WeChat, it totally depends on the individual's trustworthiness and the communication between human beings. The machine can not help you to solve these problems. There is another problem existing in China is about the "fake products" and "real products", which is very difficult to distinguish during the transaction. I used WeChat to post the pictures of my real products to my potential buyers, so that they can trust me. But there are lots of people using the fake things to replace the real things, then they influence the whole industry. This kind of situation or problem cannot be solved completely in a recent time.	TT

Appendix 11 – Interview transcript with Respondent 10 (RP10)

Date: 10:00, 5th May 2016
Present: Ning Bao (Ning) and Respondent 10 (PR10)
Interview format: Face-to-Face
Interview duration: 16 minutes 08 seconds
Transcribed by: Ning Bao
Transcription date: 6th May 2016

Line	Speaking	Text	Code
1	Ning	Have you ever sold anything on social networking platform? One time or many times? If yes: Which one?	
2	RP10	Multiple times used WeChat.	
3	Ning	Do you remember when it was the first time when you sold on Facebook/ WeChat?	
4	RP10	I almost forgot the first time; perhaps I sold furniture through Facebook in Sweden. I mainly conduct selling on WeChat (selling lunch food). For the first time I sold lunch food, is that we posted the menu information by WeChat, and the buyers can order the food in advance, they chatted with us on WeChat, after they ordered the menu, we would deliver the food to them next day.	
5	Ning	How did you make a decision to sell things on Facebook/ WeChat? Can you describe more?	
6	RP10	Because of convenience, and the information can be spread very quickly, and it costed no money, no cost.	
7	Ning	Have you ever sold your products/ services in some other ways?	
8	RP10	Facebook. I cooperated with another person, and she has a physical store.	
9	Ning	In addition to earning money, what are the benefits of using Facebook/ WeChat for selling (in comparison to other ways)?	
10	RP10	I can know more friends.	
11	Ning	Do you find that usage of Facebook/ WeChat helps you to save your time and/ or put less effort into selling activity?	
12	RP10	Yes.	RW
13	Ning	Do you think you receive enough message or notification from the buyers?	
14	RP10	Yes. It's instant and in time.	IST
15	Ning	Do you think you get enough understanding or encouragement from the buyers? Could you explain more?	
16	RP10	Yes.	
17	Ning	What kind of notifications/feedback do you get from the buyers after you inform them about the problem/trouble encountered?	
18	RP10	For example, when we delivered the lunch food for the first time, as we did lunch for the first time, and there were many orders, so the amount of one package is not so much. Then the buyers talked to us directly, they said we need to prepare more for one package next time. And there was	

		another example that one time we make chickens with large chunks, and there were some large pieces not totally boiled, and then the buyers would tell us the situation to let us to avoid the same thing happen for the next time. They are nice and will continue to buy our food. Because I think the people provided their advices means that they were satisfied with our product or service. The buyers want to buy our things and hope our things to be better, then they will provide suggestions.	
19	Ning	If you have a few buyers who want to purchase the same product/ service, how do you choose whom to sell?	
20	RP10	This question is not fit with me. Because they ordered in advance and we cooked food for them.	
21	Ning	How do you ensure the reliability of the potential buyers?	
22	RP10	I don't care about that, because we conduct the transaction face-to-face, they paid us money, and we gave them food.	
23	Ning	Do you feel a sense of belonging to WeChat? How often do you use this kind of platform?	
24	RP10	In the beginning I don't have this feeling. But now I have this feeling, I want to check and refresh the messages on WeChat every day.	CM
25	Ning	Have you thought about switching to another site? What are the possible causes to change the site?	
26	RP10	We were considering Facebook, because normally only Chinese people use WeChat, if we switched to Facebook, we hope to expand the network. If the customers can be expanded more and more, and there are lots of foreigners want to buy our food, we will consider to switch to Facebook. But for the functionality, I think WeChat and Facebook are similar.	CT
27	Ning	How would you describe your feeling when selling things on WeChat?	
28	RP10	Very Satisfied with WeChat. I think WeChat is very good, because it is relatively limited to your own network, when you send a message, only the people in your network can see your posting. But for QQ, other people who are not in your network can also see your posting. For example, if we are three friends on WeChat, and I posted one piece of information, the other two my friends can see my posting, but if these two friends do not know each other, then they can not see their posting. But for QQ, if these two friends posted messages based on my posting, they can see each other. So I think this functionality of WeChat is very good, I like it very much.	
29	Ning	So you don't want to others see your posting, and WeChat can help you to protect some of your private information?	
30	RP10	Yes, I don't want some of my friends could see their posting.	PV
31	Ning	Do you think information sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, you share product's general description such as its color, size.	
32	RP10	Yes.	
33	Ning	Do you think knowledge sharing drives you to continue selling activity? For example, when you share your experience or expertise regarding the product (in the example we take to consideration what the respondent sells/ sold).	
34	RP10	Yes. It is a part of and it is very good. For example, a lot of mothers like to share the experience about how to feed and bring up babies. I think the most important things that drive me to use WeChat for selling is because it is very convenient and it supports knowledge sharing.	CN IS
35	Ning	How often do you post/share such kind of news/information/knowledge?	
36	RP10	Nearly every day.	
37	Ning	When you chose WeChat for selling purposes, have you considered your network?	
38	RP10	It depends on the customers group. If the network is also our customers	

		group, we will send the related information in this network. Because we created a specific WeChat account, which only faced to our customers, if they ordered menu then they would add this account, and we will use this account to contact with them.	
39	Ning	Do you find the selling activity help you to expand your social network? (That means from this activity, you have more acquaintances)	
40	RP10	Yes. I can know more people. But I think it's different when you know someone by transaction and know someone in a normal way. The persons you know in a normal way will be your friends, but the persons you know by transactions are only your customers. But if you have more relations with your customer, they perhaps would become you friends.	
41	Ning	What influences/ motivates you most to sell on WeChat?	
42	RP10	Knowledge Sharing and convenience. And it saved money, because it should cost money if you make a phone-call or send a message. But for WeChat, you don't need to pay money and it is very convenient, also it is easier to communicate with others.	RW
43	Ning	Is there anything more you would like to add in terms of what stimulate you to sell things?	
44	RP10	No.	

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