DISSERTATION DEFENSE

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"Essays on socialization in online groups"

One challenge of online groups is helping new members adjust to their environment. This adjustment process has been referred to as socialization, or the process of learning the behaviors and attitudes essential to playing a role in a group. During the adjustment process, new members moved from peripheral to full participation, with their goals, tools, and perceptions of the community changed. However, there has been little empirical research on how socialization is accomplished in online groups and on its effectiveness. The goal of this thesis is to identify what kinds of socialization tactics are used in online groups, how different tactics generate more productive and committed newcomers, and how these change with individuals' tenure and their proactive behaviors involved in the socialization process.

The first study relates to the investigation phase of group socialization whereby groups attempt to recruit appropriate people and individuals assess groups. This study suggests and tests how recruitment and assessment techniques affect both assessment quality and turnover from the newcomer's and group's point of view. The second study examines the impact of various socialization practices on socialization outcome once newcomers join the group. This study investigates what types of socialization tactics are used in online groups and which tactic is effective to increases newcomers' commitment to online groups. The third study aims to identify the role of individuals involved in the socialization process. It examines the moderating impact of members' tenure and proactive behaviors on the relationship between the types of socialization tactics and member commitment by using the automated measurement method.