

Do I know you? The effects of social capital on self-assembled groups

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how individuals' social capital affects group formation processes in online systems. I conducted a study with 854 participants who assembled groups using an online platform developed for this study and examined how they sent invitations to assemble groups with others, as well as their responses to others' invitations. Through a family of statistical models for analyzing social network data, ERGMs, the result suggests that participants' prior relationships have strong effects on the likelihood of being invited and accepted in a group. I found that individuals' strength of relationships, their number of weak and strong ties, and their leadership experience influence their likelihood to be invited and accepted in a group assembled online. This study provides empirical support for social capital theories that explain how groups emerge online.

Keywords:

Social Networks; Computer-Mediated Group Interaction; Group Dynamics