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The role of personality traits in motivating users' continuance intention towards Facebook: Gender differences

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ABSTRACT

This study employs the big-five factor model and the confirmation-expectation model to examine the effect of personality traits on user continuance intention toward Facebook, a popular social network site, among university students in the United Arab Emirates. This research has two parts. First, we have examined the impact of personality traits on continuance intention to use Facebook. Second, we have explored gender differences in those relationships. We believe that our findings will help researchers and practitioners to better understand how different personality traits of each gender can motivate continuance intention toward Facebook.

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1. Introduction

The advances in network technologies have made social networking sites (SNS) more popular, and the number of individuals who are joining these sites has increased dramatically during the past few years (Al-Debei, Al-Lozi, & Papazafeiropoulou, 2013; Lin, Fan, & Chau, 2014). Social network sites, such as MySpace and Facebook, have allowed individuals to create a webpage in order to develop an online human-relationship with friends, relatives and individuals who share similar interests (Basak & Calisir, 2015; Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010; Huang, Hsieh, & Wu, 2014; Kwon & Wen, 2010; Lin & Lu, 2011; Rau, Qin, & Yinan, 2008). Despite the rising adoption of SNS, research related to their continuance usage is still limited, specifically in the area of personality traits' role on user adoption of this technology. In fact, only recently have researchers begun to examine the role of psychological factors in influencing an individual's use of SNS (Moore & McElroy, 2012). According to Amichai-Hamburger (2002), personality is an important factor to understand people's behavior on the Internet. Similarly, Lin and Ong (2010) argue that studies examining user's individual characteristics under post-adoption continuance usage context are becoming essential.

Although different personality-trait models are available in the literature, researchers agree that the Five-Factor Model (FFM) is considered one of the most used framework for identifying the different dimensions of human personality since it can capture the essence of an individual's personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Digman, 1990; Guadagno, Okdie, & Eno, 2008; Korukonda, 2007; McCrae & Costa, 1987, 1997; McCrae & John, 1992; Migliore, 2011). The Five-Factor Model, also known as the Big Five, divides personality into five different dimensions, namely: extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and agreeableness (McCrae & John, 1992).

Recent studies have investigated the effect of personality traits, using the FFM, on technology adoption, such as Internet usage (Landers & Lounsbury, 2006), collaborative technology (Devaraj, Easley, & Crant, 2008), online review (Picazo-Vela, Chou, Melcher, & Pearson, 2010), and library system (Saleem, Beaudry, & Croteau, 2011). Within the social network site context, few researchers have examined the effect of personality traits on user perception of this technology (Hollenbaugh & Ferris, 2014;

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Kuo & Tang, 2014; Rosen & Klumper, 2008; Terzis, Moridis, & Economides, 2012). Yet, our review of the related-literature on SNS has revealed that no study has investigated the role of personality traits within the context of post-adoption. Initial acceptance and use of an information system (IS) is essential for its success. But long-term adoption of an IS depends highly on its continuance use rather than its initial use (Bhattacharjee, 2001a). Therefore, it is important to study continuance usage intention of an IS as users gain experience in using it to increase our understanding of this technology (Chang, Hung, Cheng, & Wu, 2015; Kim & Malhotra, 2005). Hence, this study has been motivated by the need to investigate of the impact of the personality characteristics in determining users' continuance participation intention of SNS.

The Expectation–Confirmation Model (ECM) proposed by Bhattacharjee (2001a) is considered one of most popular and adopted models of IS continuance use (Kim, 2010; Lin, Wu, Hsu, & Chou, 2012; Stone & Baker-Eveleth, 2013; Thong, Hong, & Tam, 2006). Yet, within the social network site context, few researchers have applied the ECM to investigate user continuance intention towards this technology. Kang, Hong, and Lee (2009) and Kim (2011) have applied the ECM to examine continuance intention towards Cyworld website in South Korea, which is similar to MySpace website in the USA. Kang et al. (2009) have extended the ECM by including the effects of self-image congruity and regret. Their results have revealed that self-image congruity significantly influences perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment. Furthermore, they have found that regret is found to be the most important antecedent of continuance intention. Kim (2011) has incorporated the following factors into the ECM: enjoyment, interpersonal influence and media influence. Kim has found that interpersonal influence and enjoyment positively influence user's continuance intention in the SNS environment, while media influence is found to have no effect on SNS continuance intention. Chang and Zhu (2012) have applied the ECM to examine users' intention to continue using SNS in China. Their findings show that perceived bridging social capital has a significant influence on users' satisfaction and continuance intention, but perceived bonding social capital has none. Also, they have found that flow experience has influence on users' satisfaction but none on continuance intention and that gender has impact on users' continuance intention.

In this study, the ECM will be used as a base for conceptualizing a research model for this study, which we propose to be incorporated with the FFM taking into consideration gender differences. We believe that gender has an important effect on user attitude towards IS (Ramakrishnan, Prybutok, & Peak, 2014; Saleem et al., 2011; Yang & Lee, 2010; Zhang, Cheung, & Lee, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether there are gender differences in user perception of SNS. In this study, we investigate the moderating influence of gender on all the proposed relationships between personality traits and the ECM to determine user continuance intention towards SNS.

Our framework has been adapted from prior IS related studies which have integrated the FFM with different IS models in various settings. For example, Lin and Ong (2010) have integrated the FFM with the ECM to investigate the role of personality traits towards continuance usage intention of a university's bulletin board system. Wang (2010) has investigated the influence of personality traits on continuance intention towards instant messaging. Devaraj et al. (2008) have integrated the FFM with the TAM to investigate the effect of personality traits on intention to use collaborative technology. In this study, we hope that extending the original ECM by incorporating individual characteristics, in a different IS usage setting namely SNS will enable us to expand our understanding of user perception during the post-adoption stage, and at the same time to improve the applicability of the ECM in this rather new type of IS. Furthermore, this study investigates the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between the different personality traits and the ECM. We believe the findings of this study can enhance researchers' understanding on how gender influences users' continuance intention level of SNS, which in turn, can help managers to create appropriate marketing strategies for promoting SNS to each group.

The context of this study is Facebook use, which is considered one of the most popular and well-known SNS, particularly among university students (Chang & Heo, 2014; Ljepava, Orr, Locke, & Ross, 2013; Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javedc, 2014). Recent studies have found that over 90% of university students have Facebook accounts (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2010; Van Der Werf, 2007). It is estimated that users usually spend from 10 min to more than 2 h a day on Facebook (Orr et al., 2009; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Ross et al., 2009). Because our review of the literature has revealed that very few studies have covered the Middle East area in this context, and more specifically the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of personality traits on continuance intention to use Facebook in the UAE.

In short, this study has four objectives. First, we attempt to develop an expanded post-adoption model which is applicable to a new type of technology, namely SNS. Second, this study aims at providing a better understanding of the role of personality traits in a IS post-adoption context. We expect that our research will present an example of the integration between the ECM and the FFM by examining in more depth the relationship between personality—through the FFM—and IS continuance usage intention within the social network site context. Third, at a more practical level, this study will provide practitioners with insights into how to motivate different user personality characteristics to continue using SNS for each group gender.

The remaining sections of this study are structured as follows. In Section 2 the study discusses the theories applied in this study, reviews related literature and presents the proposed hypotheses along with the research framework. The methodology is presented in Section 3 followed by data analysis in Section 4. A discussion of the results is presented in Section 5. Section 6 highlights the implications of the current study to theory and practice and presents the study limitations and links it with future research.

2. Theoretical development and hypotheses

This study has employed the big-five factor model and the confirmation-expectation model to examine the effect of personality traits on user continuance intention towards SNS. The following sections discuss the relationship between the ECM variables as well as the influence of each of the five personality traits on the ECM variables as postulated in this study. Then, we examine the

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