

Motivations For Traditional Social Media Use: The Case Of Facebook Users

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the general profile of traditional social media users and to identify the activities of users in the social media environment. In addition, the paper aims to provide an overview of the use of social media for consumer engagement. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through social networks such as Facebook. Multivariate and inferential analyses were applied to a sample of 504 social media users. Factor analysis revealed two factors, emotional and rational. The results show that emotional and rational users consider social networks as an important part of their life routine and use them several times a day. For emotional users, social networks are the place where they comment and recommend purchased products, as well as follow news and trends, which concerns rational users. In contrast, emotional and rational users view social media as the place where they can get the best insight into company news and trends.

Keywords: Social media, Traditional social media users, User motives, User attitudes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The popularity of social media has greatly changed the way people communicate in today's rapidly changing world. The rapid development of social media has shaped people's interactions across various social media platforms (Cho et al., 2014). Online social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram provide a platform for users to communicate information, promote various campaigns, exchange their opinions and share ideas. Social media platforms have helped people expand their social relationships and provide numerous opportunities for self-expression (Talwar et al., 2019). Also, social media enact online patterns of social interaction that are markedly different from ordinary forms of acting, speaking, and relating, and refer to highly stylized forms of social interaction such as liking, following, tagging, etc (Alaimo & Kallinikos, 2019).

According to some studies, dynamism is the key to the success and popularity of social media, and users are always trying to adapt to the new changes available (Mishra & Singh, 2021). In addition, interactivity is a key feature of social media platforms, which, together with the openness of social media platforms, facilitates people's online interaction (Xue et al., 2020). Online social media are changing the way businesses and their customers interact, and have become a widespread form of communication and interaction between brands and consumers. Social media is increasingly creating new ways to engage with users and move away from traditional approaches to product development. Companies can also involve users in the product development process to improve their products or create new ones. In this context, availability of user opinions and information about existing products and co-creation for improving the product design process and overall product development are essential (Rathore et al., 2016).

Social media users have gradually moved to the centre of network activity, replacing the function of traditional media and adding new capabilities that allow them to act as creators. More and more people are accustomed to finding out about products on social media platforms in order to gain prior knowledge and thus reduce potential uncertainties in their purchase intention and decision (Gan & Wang, 2017). Therefore, mainstream social media provide businesses with the opportunity to innovate and develop, while user-generated content on social media platforms can help identify user needs and determine a target market, which provides a basis for business innovation and product improvement (Zeng et al., 2022). Also, social

media companies should pay more attention to increasing users' dependence on social media by engaging users more in social media (Kang, 2022).

The widespread popularity of social media raises a number of concerns related to the negative consequences of social media usage for individuals', in particular mental health issues and psychosocial well-being. Nowadays, in the context of young social media users, researchers are addressing the problem of social media addiction, as well as the factors that lead to this addiction and the consequences of addiction (Gong et al., 2020; Al-Samarraie et al., 2021; Ayyıldız et al., 2022). In addition, the adverse effects of increasing social media use, such as social media fatigue social media overload. (Whelan et al., 2020; Wu & Zheng, 2023). sleep problems Kaur et al. (2021) cyberbullying Jain & Agrawal, (2021) and the fear of missing out Sultan (2021); Tandon et al. (2021) are emphasised. The main aims of this paper are to examine the general profile of traditional social media users and to identify the activities of users in the social media environment. In addition, the paper aims to provide an overview of the use of social media for consumer engagement. Facebook users are considered representative of traditional social media and selected as the target of study. The paper is divided into five sections. After the introduction, the second section provides an overview of social media users' motives, social media usage, and customer engagement. The methodology is described in the third section, while the research results are presented in the fourth section. Finally, conclusions and limitations and recommendations for future research are provided in the last section.

1.2 Insights into social media motivations and customer engagement

In general, users of different social media channels are driven by different motivations and represent different segments in terms of behaviours and motivations. In this context, numerous attempts have been made to classify social media users into representative typologies. For example, two main motivational dimensions for social media website use was found: fun-related and content-specific Luchman et al.(2014). An analysis by Brandtzaeg & Heim (2011) revealed five distinct types of social networking sites users: 1) sporadic; 2) lurkers; 3) socialisers; 4) debaters; 5) actives. In addition, a study by Brandtzaeg & Heim (2011) found that the top five motivations for using social media include: (a) making new friends; (b) staying in touch with old friends; (c) socializing, often in the sense of sharing ongoing updates; (d) receiving information from others; and (e) discussing specific topics with others. Kocak et al. (2020) confirm that the motives for using alternative social networking site environments with different salient benefits are likely to vary. In relation to Instagram and based on their usage motives, social media users were classified into passionate, distant, and spectator users.

Further, Ilaria (2014) findings show that, for example, the social motivation for using social media is evident for Facebook users, while Twitter users are mainly driven by utilitarian considerations. Furthermore, complementary effects between the (new and traditional) channels are generally found in the sense that a better customer experience is driven by the presence of multiple channels Ilaria (2014). Shao et al. (2015) developed a motivation-based segmentation typology of Facebook users. Their results indicate four distinct types of Facebook users: devotee, agnostic, socializer and finder. Devotees were found to be very positive about Facebook use, while agnostics were the least motivated to use Facebook. Similarly, socializers were motivated to use Facebook for socializing and entertainment, while finders were motivated to use Facebook for information seeking. Spiliotopoulos & Oakley (2020) examined motives and behaviour across Facebook and Twitter. Their results suggest that users use both sites to satisfy their need for information, but only for entertainment that has social characteristics.

Customer engagement is demonstrated by continuous use of social media and is expected when customers have a positive attitude toward social media. Hussein & Hassan (2017) found that enjoyment has a significant impact on attitudes toward social media use, which in turn has a significant impact on levels of social media use. Emotions capture readers' attention and are essential in today's virtual environments. Especially in online interactions, such as user comments on social media platforms, emotions are increasingly present (Kohout et al., 2023). Mukherje (2020) argues that using social media for online customer engagement is a smart strategy that can be used by digital marketers to emotionally connect the advertised brand with social media users. The research shows that companies that enrich their Facebook page with social presence features can drive customer engagement with the brand. As a result, consumers

feel more informed about the brand and are therefore more positive toward it, which enhances brand experience and trust (Pongpaew et al., 2017). The findings of Barreda et al. (2020) suggest that interactivity and rewards in social media help build a stronger brand image, and that brand commitment and brand image in turn positively influence emotional attachment.

The rise of social media activity related to brand-consumer interactions is increasingly influencing the way brands and their customers communicate. Brand pages on social media have become an influential relationship-building tool and are becoming increasingly popular as an integral part of marketing strategy in various industries (de Silva, 2020). It has been found that the motives for engagement in different social media are different. In this context, social influence, entertainment, information seeking, and rewards are the main motivations for consumers to engage with brand-related content on Facebook, while entertainment, rewards, and social influence are the main motivations that influence consumer interactions on Instagram (Machado et al., 2020). Chahal et al. (2020) identified three categories of antecedents for engagement in social media: social factors (social identity and tie- strength), user-based factors (service, product, and price information, hedonic motives, and prior experience with social media), and company-generated information (personalised advertising, mass advertising, promotional offers, and price information).

Consumer engagement in social media is of growing importance for corporate communications, especially in terms of consumer motivation and brand communication. In this regard, Park & Jiang (2021) found that the motives of entertainment and reward are positively associated with brand content consumption and engagement on social media. In addition, the information-gathering motive leads people to consume brand content, while the self-expression motive leads to contributing activities. In addition, the findings of Osei-Frimpong et al.(2022) suggest that lifestyle compatibility, perceived information quality, and escapism have a significant impact on consumers' continued engagement with brands on social media.

In examining brand-consumer interactions driven by social media, Rohm et al. (2013) found that brand-consumer interactions driven by social media can be characterized by five primary motivations or themes: entertainment, brand engagement, timeliness of information and service responses, product information, and incentives and promotions. Further, Hamilton et al. (2016) found ten categories of motives for interacting with brands, including promotions and incentives, timely information, product information, engagement, browsing, purchasing, customer service, branded content, entertainment, and personalization/exclusivity. Brand platforms on social media have become a popular way for engaged customers to share information and experiences with brands and other customers (Carlson et al., 2019). Brand-consumer interactions, both intent to consume content and intent to contribute content, can be driven by specific motivations for using social media: information- seeking and self-identity (Qin, 2020).

Regarding Facebook users' experience, the active element of engagement (contribution) is positively influenced by dimensions such as entertainment, flow, sociability, and community (Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2018). In terms of engagement behaviour on social media, the findings of Dolan et al. (2019) show differential effects of rational and emotional appeals on engagement behaviour on social media. Rational appeals in social media have a superior effect in terms of promoting active and passive engagement among social media users, while emotional appeals promote passive rather than highly active engagement behaviour. Overall, it is important to monitor user behaviour on Facebook and other networks to identify social network users and consequently define marketing and communication actions to convert fans into customers (Pereira Correia, P., et al., 2014).

2. METHODOLOGY

Data were collected using the online questionnaire over a two-week period in June 2018. The study sample included a sample of 504 social media users. For the study, a non-probability sample was drawn from users of the Facebook social network. The purpose of this study is to examine users' social media activities and the sample of Facebook users was deemed most appropriate for this study. The online questionnaire was sent to all its fan users through the company's official page i.e. users who liked and actively follow post and news of the company's official page on Facebook. The basic demographic factors of the sample were age, gender, education level, and household income. The following table shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the empirical research of this paper.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Characteristics	N	Percentage (%)
Age:		
-18	45	8,9
19-25	110	21,8
26-35	175	34,7
36-45	116	23,0
46-55	53	10,5
56-	5	1,0
Gender:		
Male	167	33,1
Female	337	66,9
Education:		
Elementary school or less	43	8,5
Secondary /qualified workers	389	77,2
College /Highly qualified workers	46	9,1
University /master	24	4,8
PhD.	2	0,4
Household income (HRK):		
-1999	61	12,1
2000-3999	161	31,9
4000-5999	118	23,4
6000-7999	38	7,5
8000-	17	3,4
Without income/Students	109	21,6

Source: Research findings (N=504)

As shown in Table 1, the sample consists of 504 respondents (social media users), most of whom were female (66.9%). Most respondents were between 26 and 30 years old (34.7%), followed by respondents aged 36-45 years and respondents aged 19-25 years. Older respondents were the least represented with only 1.0%. Regarding the educational level of the respondents, most (77.2%) had a secondary school degree or a university degree (9.1%). As for the average household income, 31.9% of the respondents had income between 2000 and 4000 HRK, followed by respondents with income between 4000-5999 HRK and respondents with no income or students.

The measurement scale was developed for the purpose of this research and contains statements that measure users' motives for use in the social media environment. The questionnaire uses five-point Likert-type items (1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree). In addition, the questionnaire includes general demographic variables such as age, gender, education level, and

monthly income, as well as statements about the general characteristics of social media users. The software SPSS 21 was used to analyse the data.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Factor analysis and analysis of variance were used for the purpose of this study. The reliability and validity of the research measurement scale were tested. The test of Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the measurement scale, which contains statements about users' motives in the social media environment. The results of Cronbach's alpha for the measurement scale used for this research is 0.902, which indicates that the reliability of the measurement scale is high. To validate the measurement scale, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test were used. The value of Bartlett's test is statistically significant ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), confirming that the variables within the factors are correlated, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy showed a practical level of common variance $KMO=0.867$.

The varimax method of factor rotation was used to extract two factors that explained 62.10% of the total variance, i.e., 48.96% of the total variance was explained by factor 1, while 13.14% was explained by factor 2. Factor loadings for all items were greater than 0.50, indicating good convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement scale. Based on the content of the grouped variables, it can be concluded that factor 1 is associated with the emotional features for using social media and is referred to as the emotional factor, while factor 2 is associated with the rational and utilitarian features for using social media and is referred to as the rational factor. The factor analysis achieved its goal and the interpretation of the factors is acceptable.

Based on the result of the factor analysis, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the differences in purchasing behaviour among social media users. Table 1 shows the analysis of variance between emotional and rational factors and the importance of social media in users' daily lives.

Table 2. Analysis of variance between emotional and rational factors and the importance of social media in users' daily lives

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Emotional factor	123,164	4	30,791	40,451	,000
Rational factor	34,617	4	8,654	9,220	,000

Source: Research findings (N=504)

There are significant differences between the emotional factor and the importance of social media in users' daily routine ($p < 0.000$, $F=40.451$). These consumers indicated that social media is an important part of their lives. Users who are motivated based on emotional features try to replace their dissatisfaction in the traditional environment by using social networks. In this way, they can easily make new friends and relationships without face-to-face contact. These consumers view social media as a place where they can achieve a sense of satisfaction and belonging and escape from a traditional environment where they experience feelings of dissatisfaction.

The result also shows that there is a differences between the rational factor and the importance of social media in the daily lives of users ($p < 0.000$, $F=9.220$). The everyday engagement of these consumers could be due to the fact that they receive valuable information that helps them in their daily tasks. It is likely that this type of consumer views social media as a useful tool to obtain tailored information or to make the necessary contact to access it more quickly and easily.

Both emotional and rational users consider the use of social media as an essential part of their lifestyle. Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of variance between the emotional and rational factors and the frequency of social media use.

Table 3. Analysis of variance between the emotional and rational factors and the frequency of social media use

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Emotional factor	22,322	2	11,161	11,633	,000
Rational factor	6,49	4	3,24	3,27	,038

Source: Research findings (N=504)

The results from Table 2 for the emotional factor showed significant differences in the frequency of social media use ($p < 0.000$, $F=11.633$). Users who are motivated based on emotional features are active on social media several times a day, probably because they have a need for emotional connection. For them, social media is the place where they can make the necessary emotional connection that they do not have in the traditional environment. In addition, significant differences were found for the second factor and frequency of social media use ($p < 0.038$, $F=3.27$). These differences indicate that users who use social media for rational motivations also visit social networks several times a day, probably in order to obtain valuable information about product performance or to realize a more convenient and enjoyable purchase. The results of the variance between emotional and rational factors and the frequency of comments and recommendations are shown in Table 3.

Table 4. Analysis of variance between the emotional and rational factors and the frequency of making comments and recommendations

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Emotional factor	161,34	4	4,33	50,91	,000
Rational factor	8,94	4	2,23	2,254	,062

Source: Research findings (N=504)

It can be seen from Table 3 that there are significant differences between the emotional factor and the frequency of making comments and recommendations ($p < 0.000$, $F=50.91$). From the differences, it can be seen that these users use social media for making recommendations and comments on social media. Most of them always give a necessary review and if they have a stronger emotional need to use social media, they are more likely to be open to writing reviews or comments. The results for the rational factor show that there are no significant differences between this factor and the frequency of making comments and recommendations ($p < 0.000$, $F=2.254$). The next table shows the results of the analysis of variance between the emotional and rational factors and the attitude towards following news and trends.

Table 5. Analysis of variance between emotional and rational factors and the attitude towards following news and trends

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Emotional factor	113,43	4	28,35	36,32	,000
Rational factor	119,80	4	29,95	39,00	,000

Source: Research findings (N=504)

As shown in Table 4, there is a significant difference between the emotional factor and attitudes in following news and trends ($p < 0.000$, $F=113.41$). The results indicate that emotional users consider social networks as one of the tools that are useful to perceive the new trends that companies post on their official social media pages. When these users access social media for emotional reasons, they will be more involved in following the news and trends of the company. The results of the one-way analysis calculated for the rational factors and attitudes in following news and trends show significant differences ($p < 0.000$, $F=119.80$). Rational users use social media to get the information they need to stay up-to-date on the news and trends of the company they follow. They consider social media to be a helpful place where they can customise their search and easily find information that interests them.

4. CONCLUSION

Motivations has been a topic of research in social media, mainly investigative why users continue to use social media. However, in social media, users are mostly highly motivated in social connectivity and

communication with the other users or companies. The main aims of this paper are to examine the general profile of traditional social media users and to identify the activities of users in the social media environment. In addition, the paper aims to provide an overview of the use of social media for consumer engagement. For the purpose of the study, factor model extracted two factors named emotional factor and rational factor. These two factors show that there are two motivations that drive the traditional social media use. The first motivation is related to emotional interactivity and the second motivation is related to users who want a better information-oriented experience in the process of making a purchase decision and these users use traditional social media only for rational motivations.

The results show that users who use social media for rational and emotional motivations consider social networks as an important part of their life routine and use them several times a day. The results show that these users use the social networking website more frequently than once a day. This indicates that users have begun to appreciate the benefits of social media, especially when searching for the information they need. They consider social media as a useful place where they can find all the necessary information about new trends. Nowadays, trends occur very frequently, and probably that is why they believe that social media could enable them to keep up with the new styles or innovations. Thus, the results show that users who use social media with emotional and rational motivations consider social media as the place where they can get the best insight into the company's innovations and trends. The results also suggest that for users who use social media based on emotional motivations consider social media platform as a place where they comment and recommend purchased products and express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the purchase. They view social media tools as helpful in connecting with other users. In this way, they are likely to try to satisfy their emotional needs and get a sense of belonging, for example, to a brand community. By gaining a sense of belonging, they achieve the necessary emotional connection, thereby increasing brand awareness and consumer engagement. However, no significant differences were found between rational users and their willingness to comment and rate their experience after purchase.

The contribution of this paper was to provide an analysis that explains the behavioural characteristics of traditional social media users. The results can help companies predict the use of social media by their fans, i.e., potential consumers. The results also suggest that social media can be used as a tool to analyse consumer behaviour based on the importance of use in everyday life as well as the frequency of use. These users tend to make their true opinions about certain products known on social media in order to increase brand awareness. The present study has some limitations. First, generalising the results of this study should be done with caution due to the characteristics of the sample. In addition, future research should consider other variables (e.g., geographic, psychographic, and price factors) to provide a comprehensive behavioural profile of social media users.

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