Homo Virtualis

Blockchain and disruptive technologies in social sciences: Interdisciplinary perspectives

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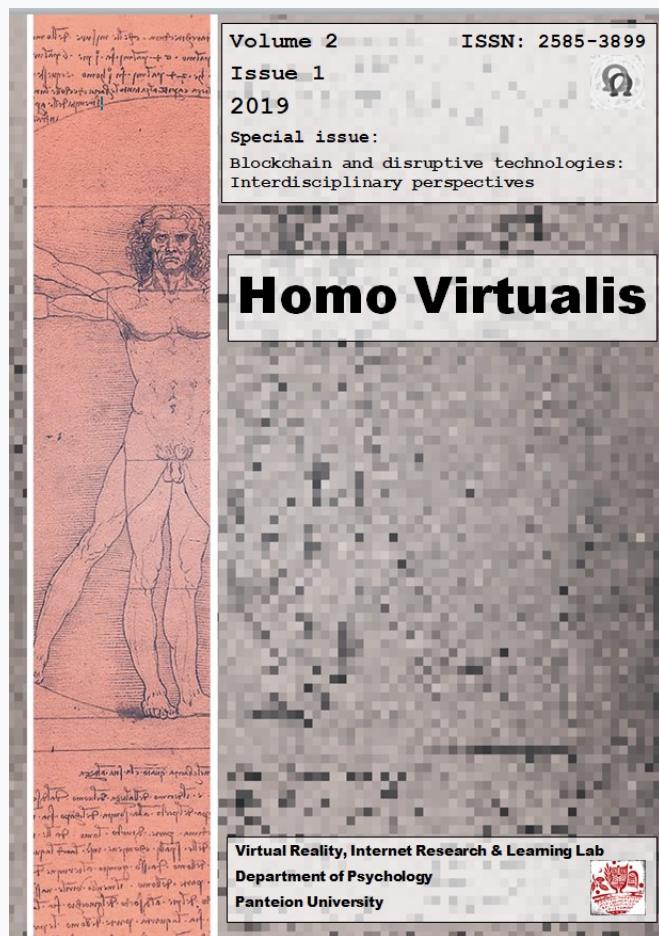
Virtual networks: Why do students use Instagram?

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Virtual networks: Why do students use Instagram?

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Abstract: Instagram has become the bridge between consumers who share moments from their lives and companies that share their products and services with the users. Instagram stands out from the other social media networks thanks to user-friendly toolkit that provides photo editing, video sharing and Instagram stories. This conceptual model research investigates the impact of Instagram on user's attitude. Data were collected from young Instagram users in order to measure if there is a relationship between specific factors of Instagram and user attitude through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). In this research, will be analyzed the consumer behavior in social media and particularly on Instagram. As a first stage of our research we are going to develop the theoretical study for Instagram users (n=200) at the age of 18-34, investigating the behavior of use Instagram which is determined by social presence. This study presents a theoretical conceptual model based on the theory of social presence, perceived pleasure, perceived usefulness and perceived value on Instagram and the potential connection of those factors to the user attitude.

Keywords: *virtual networks, Instagram, user attitude, social presence, perceived pleasure, perceived usefulness, perceived value*

Introduction

Instagram is a very popular social network among students. Understanding the reasons of why students use this tool will help us to understand their emotional and psychological state (Mazer et al., 2007). (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), refer that attitude has two dimensions: attitude towards objects and attitude towards behavior. This study focuses on user attitude towards objects conditions usefulness perception of them. Instagram is the most popular and hedonic social network because you can upload stories, photos and videos and you can easily share them with your friends (Van der Heijden, 2004), or make them public to others user by using hashtag, but especially trends that influence users' inspiration (Childers et al., 2001). Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by (Davis et al., 1989) and the extended TAM by (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000) has been used to measure the acceptance of the using social media (Rauniar et al., 2014). The paper is structured as follows: First we present the re-

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search background. Next, we present the research methodology and hypotheses, the data analysis and at the end we present the conclusion of our empirical study and the next steps to be followed.

Research background

User reviews provide a rich source of information regarding user interests. Many Web platforms (e.g. Instagram) allow or even encourage their visitors to leave their feedback regarding the products and services they have consumed (Kardaras et al., 2018). On Instagram users can directly upload photos or videos through their mobile. As an Instagram user you have the option to make your profile public or not.
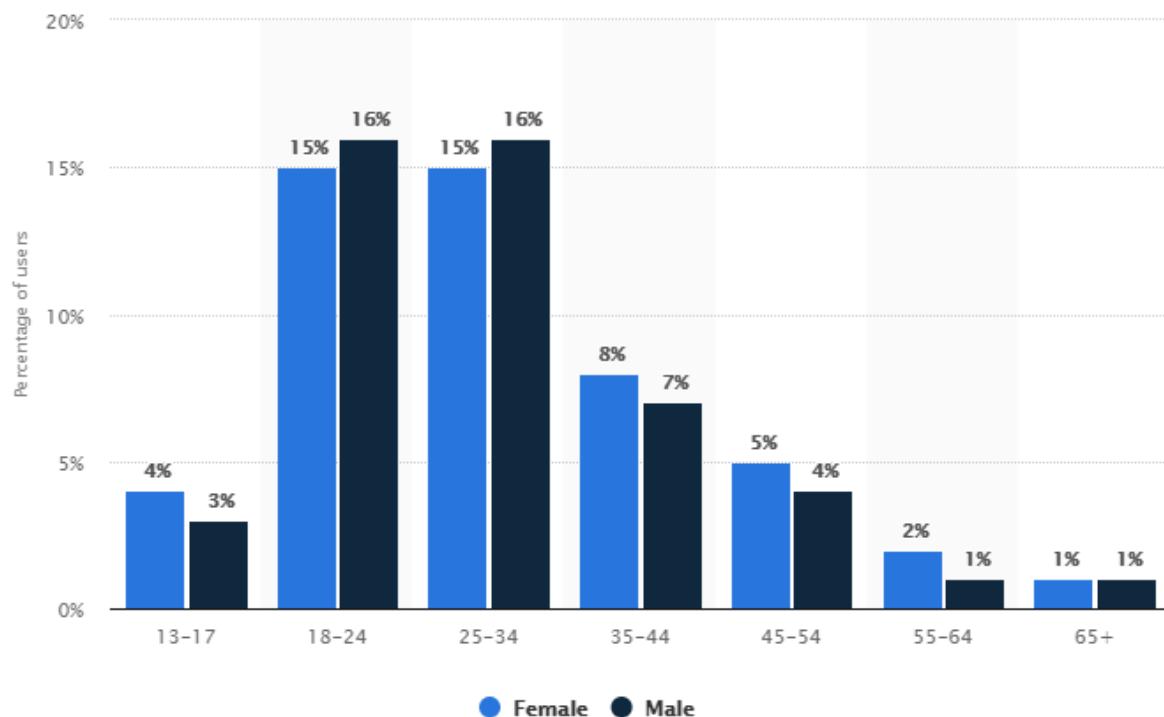

Figure 1. *Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of October 2018,*

by age and gender

Consumer behavior

Online behavior of Consumers' is developing very fast. Users are taking part in a variety of activities like, creating content, sharing photos and videos, creating stories, participating in discussions, and sharing knowledge with other users. This behavior provoke changes to media and marketing landscape as users are the main product of marketing companies' (Berthon et al., 2008). However, people act and behave as consumers. The term "consumer

behavior" refers to the behavior of a person during the search, purchase, evaluation and usage of a product. Purchase decision depending from factors and processes like, perceive attitude, learning background, age, place of living, gender, lifestyle, principles and values, culture, social factors etc.
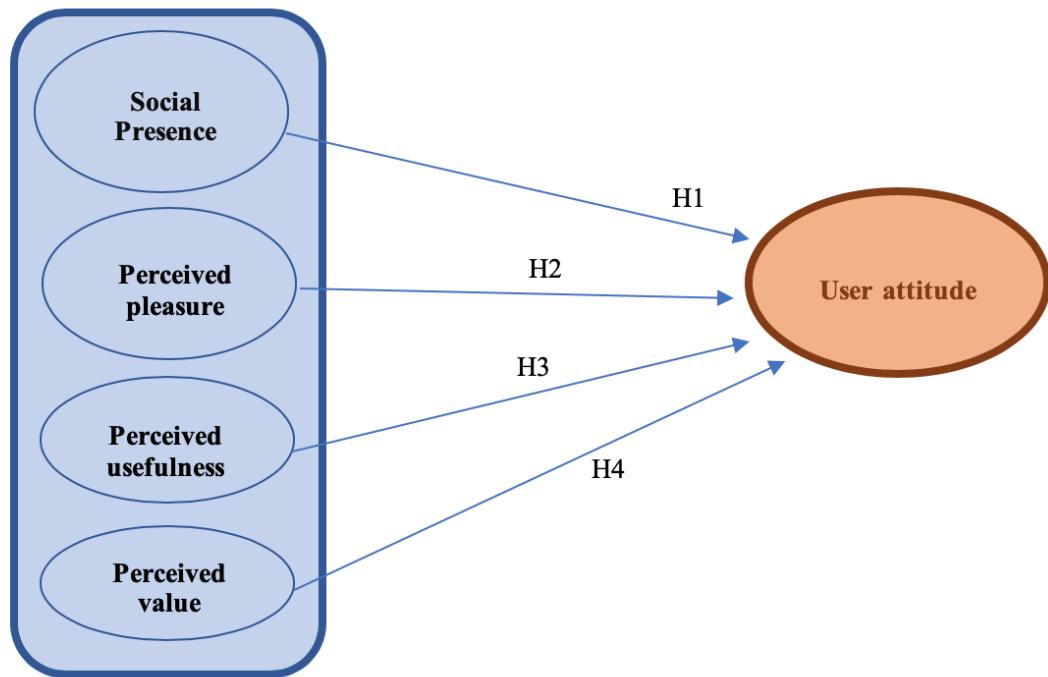

Figure 2. *Conceptual model*

Research methodology and hypotheses

Social presence

Short et al. (1976) said that social presence is ''the degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of interpersonal relationships". When we are talking about human contact, we mean the presence in a virtual environment like Instagram (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Users on Instagram can perform communication in a style like face-to-face communication. Research has found that social media like Instagram tend to be preferred in communication (Straub & Karahanna, 1998).

H1. Social Presence on Instagram has a positive influence on user attitude

Perceived Pleasure

When people use technology and feel pleased or joyful, they perceive technology as a contributory value and they are willing to use it again and again (Davis et al., 1992). Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo (2007) said that the meaning of perceived value incorporates

two different values (utilitarian and hedonic). Perceived pleasure is defined as a part of positive influence from using technology and it is perceived as enjoyable in its own right (Straker & Wrigley, 2018; Yahia et al., 2018).

H2. Pleasure has a positive influence on user attitude on Instagram

Perceived usefulness

By the term usefulness we refer to perceived benefits of behavior (Davis et al., 1989) and the usage intention by the user (Lee & Seshia, 2016). Some authors conclude that perceived usefulness determines the use of Information Systems (IS), (Mathieson, 1991; Taylor & Todd, 1995a; Agarwal & Prasad, 1999). According to all above, social users feel that using Instagram, provides them an extra benefit and they develop a positive attitude towards Instagram use.

H3. *Perceived usefulness* has a positive influence on user attitude on Instagram

Perceived value

Users evaluate Instagram based on their perceptions of what they are willing to achieve and what to sacrifice. Perceived value involves a balance between costs 91989and benefits and an interaction between customer and service (Payne & Holt, 2001). Davis (1989) analyse in the cost-benefit theory that the discrimination of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness is similar between product performance and the effort of using the product or service (Kaperonis, n.d.).

H4. Perceived value has a positive influence on user attitude on Instagram

Data collection

The data for this study has been collected through a convenient sample e-survey from SM users. The e-survey was sent with a Facebook link in over of 230 users' profile. The number of responders was 200 users. The age range of the responders was between 18 and over 34.

Data analysis

This research study adopted Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses. By using SEM we want to evaluate our proposed model, analyze and explain the collected data (Hair et al., 2006). In SEM terms, y enclose the endogenous variables and χ enclose the exogenous variables (Kline, 2010). Covariances, such as the one between χ_1, χ_2, χ_3 and χ_4 are represented by two-way arrows, Figure 3. The structural equations for this model are:

$$y_1 = \gamma_{11}\chi_1 + \gamma_{12}\chi_2 + \gamma_{13}\chi_3 + \gamma_{14}\chi_4 + e_1 \quad (1)$$

In our proposed research we can see a model with one y variable and four χ variables. For the reason of the multiple dependent variables, the covariances and the variances of the exogenous factors x's are given and are estimated by the values of the sample. Freedom degrees of our model count the elements in the Φ matrix containing four values of γ, and one of ψ.


In this research, the Amos 24.0 SEM analysis package will be used to test and estimate our conceptual model. Two different approaches are going to be used for testing our research hypotheses. The first approach is with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the second with analysis of variance regression (ANOVA).
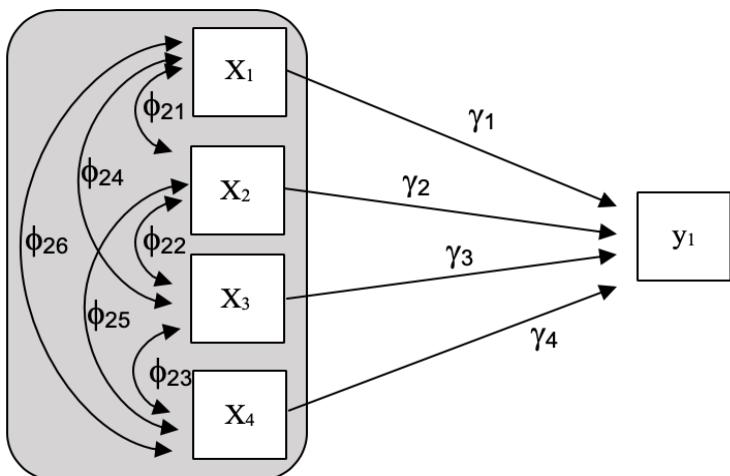
Figure 3. *Proposed research model*

Conclusion

The aim of this article is to create a model by which we will be able to interpret the effect of specific Instagram factors on user attitude. The theoretical background and the research gap that led us to the study of the specific case are elaborated in the article. The results will show us whether there is a correlation or relationship among the following factors and user attitude. The factors are: social presence, perceived pleasure, perceived usefulness and perceived value. As a next step to this research, we will analyze the data collected from the e-survey and test the validity of our research model by detecting the factors that influence the user attitude. With SEM we going to check our assumptions and confirming our model. The data analysis by use of the SEM will determine the critical factors concerning the customer attitude towards to Instagram.

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