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Technostress Effect in Consumer Context: The Negative Effect of Following Social Media Influencers

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Abstract Social media and its applications, such as social networks, have become well embedded in modern people's life. Much research has focused on the good side of social media marketing and adoption. However, very little research was devoted to study the dark-side of social media especially in out of work context. This paper is focusing on the dark side of social media in out of work context. Also utilizes the stress-strain model and social comparison theory to suggest following SMIs as potential technostressor and shopping addiction as a potential negative outcome o technostress

Keywords: social media, social media influencers, technostress

1   Introduction

Social media and its applications, such as social networks, have become well embedded in modern people's life (Alalwan et al. 2017; Dwivedi et al. 2015; Kapoor et al. 2018; Shiau et al. 2017; 2018). Over the past decade, social media have been transforming how individuals, communities, and organizations create, share, and consume information from each other and from firms (Baccarella, 2018). Much research focused on understanding the advantages and disadvantages of social media bring to individuals and businesses in work context (e.g. Bucher, 2013Kumar et al., 2016; Wagner, 2017; Yasir et al, 2017; Stich et al, 2018). Nevertheless, little research has been conducted to understand the effects of social media out of work context.

The term "dark-side" of IT use refers to a "collection of 'negative' phenomena that are associated with the use of IT, and that have the potential to infringe the well-being of individuals, and societies" (Tarafdar et al., 2015a, p. 161).

Understanding the negative effect of social media in the personal context is very important for organizations and policymakers alike. This is due to the possibility that social media is undermining the freedoms and the well-being of the individuals and communities they serve.

The negative effect of social media on individuals outside of workplace is being increasingly reported. For example, Forest and Wood (2012) have reported that Facebook is viewed by people with low self-esteem as an appealing venue for self-

disclosure. Consequently, receiving negative feedback on their disclosure can lower users' happiness. Also, prolonged use of technology can lead to greater stresses and affect an individual's well-being. Thus, by understanding the negative effect of social media on individuals on their personal level is very important for policymakers to refine policies and regulations in order to protect the public.

Technostress -which refers to stress induced by information and communication technologies (Brooks et al, 2017)- was addressed by a number of studies as a negative phenomenon associated with using social media at the workplace (e.g. Tarafdar et al., 2007; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Ayyagari et al., 2011). Yet, to the best of my knowledge, there is no study that focuses on identifying sources of technostress and its effect on individuals in out of work context.

In this paper, the author will follow the same stressor-strain model used in studying technostress sources and effect in the workplace to investigate one of the potential technostress sources and its effect in personal usage this is social media influencer. This paper also suggests a number of prepositions that present a potential negative outcome of adopting social networks such as Instagram.

2   Literature review

2.1   Social media and social media influencers

Social Media "is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p.61). User-Generated Content, "which describes the various forms of media content created by end-users outside of a professional context and is publicly available" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p 61), is what differentiates social media from other more traditional forms of media. Social media influencer (micro-influencers) (Arora et al. 2019) are one of the content creators that are mainly found creating content on different platforms such as Instagram and snapchat.

Combley (2011) defined influencers as individuals who have the ability to induce a change in the attitudes and behaviors of others. The emergence of Web 2.0 social media has introduced a new type of influencers which is referred to as social media influencers (SMIs) (Ki, 2018). SMI is described as a "third party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media" (Feberg et al., 2011, p1).

Khamis et al. (2017) stated that SMIs (who range from unknown actresses and models, fitness trainers, friends of celebrities, and wealthy people who love luxury brands to pretty high school girls) create their own image through the practice of self-presentation on social media to attract the attention of followers. De Veirman et al.

(2017) called SMI a trusted tastemaker with a solid base of fans who follow their content (published videos, images and motivational stories on social media channels such as Instagram and other social media platforms (Bolat and Gilani, 2018) for entertainment or inspiration. Recently it is becoming more noticeable that SMIs shared content is focused on their luxurious life, perfect body image, and their ownership of high-end brands (Marwick, 2015). Although such as postings might be considered entertaining by many followers, it can also trigger negative emotions amid ordinary people who perceive such as perfect image and luxury life as unattainable (ki, 2018). Therefore, in this paper the author we will assume SMI source stress that affect their followers negatively and investigate the outcome of this type of stress.

2.2   Technostress

Technostress is a concept that was developed in the 1980s and described mental and physiological arousal and consequent pressure caused by an inability to cope with ComputerWorld technologies in a healthy manner (Brod, 1984, Lee at al., 2016). Technostress has also been described as negative attitudes, thoughts, behaviors, or physiology caused directly or indirectly by technology (Weil and Rosen, 1997; Brooks at al., 2017). Further, technostress has been defined as a user's experience of stress when using technologies (lee at al., 2016).

For clarity, this paper adopts the stressor-strain model in order to theoretically decompose the overall concept (Yan et al, 2013). Stressors are described as the source of technostress and represents any stimuli that individual is encountered with that cause a negative outcome (Ayyagari et al., 2011) in this paper we are investigating SMI as stress source. Strains are individuals' negative psychological response to stressors caused by being exposed to a specific stressor (Ayyagari et al., 2011). Stress has a broad definition that can refer to the stimuli, process, as well as outcomes (Yan et al, 2013). In this paper we will focus on two potential outcomes to stress resulting from exposure to SMIs these are shopping addiction and materialism.

2.2.1   Shopping addiction

Research has evidence to support the existence of a relationship between stress and addiction as an outcome of stress (Brooks et al, 2017). For example, Sinha (2001) reported that that stressed out individuals tend to show vulnerability towards drug abuse. This relationship can be attributed to individuals fail to self-regulate their destructive tendencies when under stress; which results in lack of self-control (Tice et al., 2001).

Addictive behavior is a term that refers to extreme behavior that has negative consequences and characterized by a loss of control, and negative results for the individual either psychologically, physically or socially (Sussman et al., 2010; Rose and Dhandayudham, 2014). Addiction is postulated to have two features. Firstly, the

failure to resist the impulse behavior regardless of its negative consequences. Secondly, the existence of a period of tension followed by a relief during the act (Benson, 2008).

Evidence suggests that addiction symptoms are related to technology similar to other addictive elements like drugs (Brooks et al, 2017). For example, social media may encompass some of the features that cause substance-related addictions (Kuss and Griffiths, 2011). Thus, in this paper, we will investigate addiction as an outcome to social media stress.

The literature on addiction has reported that problem-based behaviors can develop in relation to both consumption and buying. Consequently, shopping was identified as a type of addiction and the number of terms has developed such as "impulsive purchasing" and shopping addiction (Baumeister, 2002). In our assumption, as SMIs are showing off their luxury life. Hence, in this paper, we will investigate shopping addiction as a stress outcome that results from being exposed to SMIs.

2.2.2 Materialism

Richins and Dawson (1992) defined materialism as the importance ascribed to the ownership and acquisition of material goods in achieving major life goals or desired states. Accordingly, it is expected that individuals described as materialists will value ownership of products and will have a positive attitude and eventually the intention to own different products.

The relations between people's values such as materialism and ownership, and their emotional experiences such as stress are of key interest to many consumer researchers (Brown et al, 2016). However, there are very few published works that address the relationship between materialism and stress (Somer and Ruvio, 2014). Accordingly, this paper will investigate materialism as a stress outcome that results from being exposed to SMIs.

3 Theoretical framework

To explain the relationship between stressors (SMIs) and developing technostress in a form of negative feelings and behavior we draw on a well-known theory in psychological research, social comparison theory.

3.1 Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory (SCT) theorizes that individuals form opinions about their social and personal worth, and evaluate their abilities and limitations through comparing themselves to others (Festinger 1954). SCT suggests that people are continuously evaluating themselves and others across a number of domains such as attractiveness.

Research on SCT proposes that, under certain conditions, social comparison present individual with negative ideas and self-threats that can lead to negative reactions (Mussweiler et al. 2000; Argo et al., 2006) for example, individuals who often compare themselves to other experience negative feelings such as feelings of deep dissatisfaction and envy (Chae, 2018). Furthermore, SCT suggests that social comparisons will lead individuals to negatively evaluate themselves when a comparison is made against someone who is relevant or psychologically close, and when performed in an important domain (Argo et al., 2006).

SMI is very similar to their followers (some of them are even ordinary people); which makes them more relevant to their followers. Also, having these SMIs posting photos and Snaps mainly about beauty, fashion, luxury brands and lavish holidays makes them part of an important domain that people generally aspire to have and belong to but find hard to acquire and accompany (Chae, 2018). As a result, it is expected that SMIs followers will start comparing their own status to SMIs', and they will develop negative feelings.

4   Research prepositions

4.1   Social media influencers as a form of technostressor

Stressors are the reason why individuals experience technostress (Brooks et al, 2017). As SMIs are continuously posting about their luxury life, holidays, and high-end merchandise they are expected to trigger negative emotions amid ordinary people who perceive such as perfect image and luxury life as unattainable (ki, 2018). Therefore, in this paper, we propose that SMIs provokes social comparison and create stress for social media user. Therefore, they are considered a source of technostress

Proposition 1: SMIs on social media platforms are considered a stressor.

4.2   Materialism as a strain

Mandel and Smeesters (2008) suggested that materialism may be a potential outcome of stress. Followers of SMIs on social network platforms are constantly presented with massages which glorify high brands and different product ownership as indicators of success and happiness. Thus, materialism is proposed to become a criterion to measure success. individuals, in this case, are expected to get keener on owning different products and to spend more on high brands. As a result, materialism and the need to own will become an outcome of stress.

Proposition 2: it is expected that followers of SMIs on social networks will value ownership and will develop appreciation to materialism.

4.3   Materialism as a mediator

Richins (2004) stated that materialism is a representation of how much an individual value owning material possessions. Consequently, it is expected that individuals who holds this quality achieve emotional satisfaction through ownership.

Which indicates that lack of ownership will result in a negative feeling (Belk, 1987) and consequently an urge to eliminate the negative feeling.

In this paper, we postulate that appreciating materialism as a result of being exposed to SMIs will increase the stress and affect shopping addiction thus we propose that materialism will mediate the relationship between following SMIs and shopping addiction.

Proposition 3: Materialism is postulated to have a mediation relationship between following SMIs as stressors and shopping addiction as a strain

5   Proposed Research Methodology

This research aims to study the effect of validating a number of prepositions that are related to the negative effect and behaviors related to using social media in out of work context. Therefore, the sample of this study will be followers of SMIs. Jordan comes first globally in usage of social media relative of internet users. Therefore, the sample from Jordan is expected to be a representative sample. A quantitative data collection strategy is recommended for this research as most of the proposed variables has been studied before using well-established scales. Factors will be measured using scale items adopted from previous studies. Once the data is collected, structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis will be conducted to validate the prepositions and create a conceptual model.

6   Implications to theory and practice:

Today, everything is about Social Media which is allowing companies to engage with their customers more efficiently and at a very low cost(Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). SMIs are becoming a form of social media tools that companies use to promote for their products. Nevertheless, social media is having a noticeable negative impact on the public by undermining the freedoms and the well-being of the individuals and communities they serve. Therefore, it is very important for companies to understand the effect of their promotion tools on the public in order to remain ethical and to keep their social responsibility promise to their communities. Also, policymakers can benefit from understanding the effect of such tools in order to protect the public. This paper gives an insight into SMIs potential side effect on individuals and tries to enrich the literature of technostress by studying probing the dark-side of social media out of workplace.

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