

**SOCIAL MEDIA USE INTENSITY AT WORKPLACE AMONG HUMAN RESOURCES  
EXECUTIVES OF A GOVERNMENT AGENCY HEADQUARTERS  
IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

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### **Abstract**

Browsing social media is a common daily activity for most people all around the globe nowadays regardless of age and gender. Although the frequency, duration and motive of browsing social media differs from one person to another, the existence of employees who have social-media mania and keep browsing social media all the time even during their working hours causes the employers to monitor their employees' social media use intensity at workplace from time to time. This study looks at the level of social media use intensity at workplace among Human Resources executives of a government agency headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Questionnaires were used to collect data on the sample. Due to its quite small population size, total population sampling method is applied. Out of 68 executives, only 30 completed the questionnaires (response rate = 44.12%). Findings revealed that the sample have high level of social media use intensity at workplace. However, there was no statistically significant difference between social media use intensity and gender. Other than that, it was found that the main motive behind using social media at workplace is interpersonal. As for the implications of this study, it contributes to the corpus of knowledge in the area of social media use intensity at workplace in local organization context and provides empirical data to assist organization in conducting appropriate policy to control social media use intensity at workplace among their employees.

**Keywords:** *Social Media Use Intensity, Motives Behind Using Social Media, Government Agency*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The fact that one out of five tweets is about work, product or service (Kerkhof, 2011) is an indication of the shift from personal use of social media to professional use. Many organizations and companies in Malaysia have been utilizing the power of social media to their advantage. Based on Regus (2011), 51% of Malaysian companies procured new businesses through various networking activities via social media, 68% used it to engage with existing customers, 75% promoted the use of LinkedIn among their employees and about 20% of annual marketing budget was spent by 52% of Malaysian companies on networking activities via social media. Other than that, a survey conducted by JobStreet.com (2013) to investigate the impact of social media at the workplace showed that 80 % of employers agreed that social media is a crucial instrument in enhancing business potentials. Yet, the survey also showed that many companies in Malaysia are lenient with their social media use at workplace policy (Jobstreet, 2013).

The frequent use of social media combined with convenience of finding information online eventually might distort one's personal and work identity (Mostaghimi & Crotty, 2011). This subsequently brought up the issue whether the employees really utilize the Internet for work purposes or for other purposes as well. To date, little academic research (Shahizan, Norshuhada & Sohibathun Nur, 2015) has been conducted on social media use intensity at workplace in local context. Most of the previous surveys (Regus, 2011; Jobstreet.com, 2013) conducted on social media use among Malaysians at workplace were commercial based. Besides, based on the researchers' limited knowledge, only a small number of published research on motives behind social media use at workplace in Malaysia could be found. In relation to the research gap, this research intends to identify social media use intensity among Human Resources executives of a government agency headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

### **1.1 Research Question**

This research intends to find the answer for the following research questions:

1. What is the level of social media use intensity at workplace among the employees?
2. What are the motives in social media use intensity at workplace among the employees?
3. Is there any significant difference between level of social media use intensity at workplace between gender?

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Social Media Use Intensity Among Gender**

Previous research showed that there are gender differences in social media use patterns. In a study by Bujala's (2012), it was found that male spent longer time using social media per week with 12.08 hours compared to 9.05 hours among female. This finding is further supported by other studies that found not only male spend more time on the Internet but also use diverse types of social media compared to female (see Fogel & Nehmad, 2009; Jones, Johnson-Yale, Millermaier, & Perez, 2009; Ko, Liu, Hsiao, Yen, Yang, Lin, Yen & Chen, 2008). Besides, other studies claimed that men tend to have more friends on social media than women (Raacke & Bonds-Raake, 2008), whereas others have found the opposite (Wilkinson & Thewall, 2010; Pfeil, Arjan & Zaphiris, 2009).

### **2.2 Blumler And Katz's (1974) Uses And Gratification Theory**

Different social networking sites are being used by different types of users for different reasons. Blumler and Katz's (1974) uses and gratification theory is one of the main theories used to explain audiences' choices and consumptions of media. It describes that users are active participants in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use (Taranovych, 2014). As there are various kinds of media, this theory states that users will select a specific medium that best gratify their social goals or fulfil psychological needs (Matei, 2010). The needs which fulfilled by media are called media gratification (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

With respect to modern technology such as social media, this theory is relevant to be applied because different people use it for different motives. Employing this theory, several studies have examined motives for using the social media such as Leila, Rouhollah, Maryam and Muhammad Ahmad (2014), Cha (2011), Quan-Haase and Young (2010), Ancu and Cozma (2009), Park, Kee and Valenzuela (2009), and Joinson (2008).

## 2.3 Motives in Using Social Media

### 2.3.1 Gender and Motives in Using Social Media

Previous studies have shown some distinction in social media preferences and motives by gender (Barker, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Females used social media for communication with their loved ones, entertainment and passing time, whereas men used it in an instrumental way for social compensation, learning, and social identity gratifications in the context of identify with others who share similar characteristics or interest (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2012; Barker, 2009; Valkenburg et al., 2006).

Moreover, Mazman and Usluel (2011), Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) and Tufekci (2008) found that males mostly used social media for making new friends while females used it mostly for finding their old friends and keeping in touch with the existing ones. The reasons for these findings could be explained by the possibility that females had tendency to hide their identities and personal information to keep their privacy in Internet environment (Mazman & Usluel, 2011; Sheldon, 2008).

Meanwhile, according to Bujala (2012), the three most common motives in using social media by both genders are entertainment, communication and seeking information. However, frequency of use for each motive varies from one another. It was found that social media use intensity among male are higher than women for communication and entertainment motives, whereas women's social media use intensity are higher than men for seeking information motive (Bujala, 2012).

### 2.3.2 Seek Information/Learning Motive

According to Taranovych (2013), seek information includes being up to date about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world. Besides, it also involves self-learning on society issues, looking for advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choice, gratifying curiosity and general interest (Terlutter, Diehl & Okazaki, 2013; Neville & Hevin, 2013). Results from a study conducted by Urista, Dong and Day (2011) indicated that the openness and transparency of social media is highly popular among users as it allows them to gain information quickly.

### 2.3.3 Entertainment Motive

Entertainment is often viewed as the predominant way to relax and to pass one's spare time (Vergeer & Pelzer, 2009). According to Johnston (2014), entertainment includes escaping from problems, relaxing, getting fundamental cultural or artistic enjoyment, filling time, emotional release and sexual arousal. However, Brandtzaeg and Heim (2009) stated that entertainment would also include unspecified fun, time killing and profile surfing. On the other hand, Sheldon's study (2008) revealed that entertainment is a strong gratification sought in Facebook use. Meanwhile, another study by Al-Sharqi, Hashim and Kutbi (2015) on Arts and Science students of King Abdulaziz University (KAU) also showed similar finding in which Entertainment represents the highest motive for social media use.

### 2.3.4 Social Interaction/Interpersonal Utility Motive

Social media has gained remarkable popularity worldwide because it does not only allow users to maintain personal relationships with family, friends, and colleagues but also provides them with opportunities to engage with new social connections based on similar interests, tastes and goals (Wong et al, 2011; Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009; Park, Kee & Vanlenzuela, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). As for Collin, Rahilly, Richardson and Third (2011), they further argued that social media are primarily used for friendship establishment and maintain networking with personal or professional contacts and making plans such as organizing an event or a cause. This is in line with a number of studies such as Reich, Subrahmanyam, & Espinoza (2012) and Tosun (2012) who

reported that nurturing or maintaining existing relationships and seeking new ones has been the most mentioned motive for social media use.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The research design is determined by research purposes and research questions. This research is a descriptive survey as it aims to survey the social media use intensity and motives of social media use by Human Resource executives of a government agency headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. To achieve this purpose, this research employed quantitative research design because it gives a more accurate empirical data on the level of the social media use intensity as well as types and patterns of use of motives among the respondents. Moreover, quantitative research design is applied for research that focuses more on counting and classifying features; and constructing statistical models and figures to explain what is observed (Explorable.com, 2009).

#### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The population of this case study was the Human Resources executives of a government agency headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The rationale of using executives as population in this study is because executives represent a significant portion of the professional staffs that are frequently browsing Internet to accomplish their daily works. Meanwhile, Human Resources department was chosen due to the fact that the findings from this study might assist them in constructing new policy regarding social media use at workplace. Currently, there are about 68 executives in Human Resources department of the government agency headquarters. Due to its small population size, total population sampling procedure is applied in this study. However, only 30 executives responded to the questionnaire (response rate = 44.12%).

#### **3.3 Instrumentation**

In this study, the instrument took the form of a questionnaire. This is because if the researcher has a specific set of questions to be answered and is looking for problematic areas to emerge, written questionnaire is a suitable step to test different hypotheses (Explorable.com, 2009). This questionnaire was divided into three sections: Sections A, B and C with a total of 19 items.

Section A focused on the demographic data of the respondents. It consisted of four items regarding gender, age, academic qualifications and years of service. The respondents were required to tick the information related to them in the boxes provided and fill in the space provided.

Section B answered the first research question which was about level of social media use intensity among respondents. It was based on the social media use intensity questionnaire instrument by Moqbel (2012). This section consisted of six items.

Section C answered the second research question which was about motives behind social media use among respondents. It was based on the social media use motives questionnaire by Cha (2011). This section consisted of four items under interpersonal utility motive, three items under entertainment motive and two items under seeking information/learning motive. Overall, there were nine items in this section.

The method of response for both section B and C was a 5-point Likert scale items with a scale of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, in which 1 indicated “strongly disagree”, 2 indicated “disagree”, 3 indicated “neutral”, 4 indicated “agree” and 5 indicated “strongly agree”. The respondents circled the scale that accurately described their response for each item.

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents via a gatekeeper. The gatekeeper is one of the Human Resources (HR) executives in the government agency headquarters. The respondents were informed to answer all items in the questionnaire and were assured of the confidentiality of the data gathered. They were also asked to answer and return the questionnaire within a period of five days. The rationale of five days period is because they are busy with their jobs and sometimes need to work outstation. Hence, five days period is sufficient for them to answer and return the questionnaire to the gatekeeper. During the five days period, gatekeeper also reminded respondents several times to answer the questionnaire. However, out of 68 respondents, only 30 respondents returned completed questionnaires to the gatekeeper (response rate = 44.12%).

### 3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The completed questionnaires were analysed using SPSS. To answer the first and second research questions, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used. Besides, in order to determine the level of social media use intensity, scores are divided to three different levels. Scores below 1.66 indicates low intensity, scores between 1.67 and 3.32 indicates moderate use intensity and scores above 3.33 indicates high use intensity.

Next, to answer the third research question, the independent sample t- test was employed. Independent sample t-test is a parametric statistical test used most commonly in determining if there exists a difference in means between two independent groups or related groups (Singh, Puzziawati & Teoh, 2009). In the context of this study, it was conducted to find out whether there were significant differences between social media use intensity at workplace with gender.

## 4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**RQ 1:** What is the level of social media use intensity at workplace among the employees?

**Table 1: Social media use intensity at workplace among the executives**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Level
Social media use intensity at workplace	30	3.53	0.452	High

\*1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5= Strongly agree

Table 1 illustrates the overall mean score of social media use intensity among the executives. In general, the findings (M=3.53, SD=0.452) revealed that the respondents agreed that they had high level of social media use intensity at workplace. This is in line with My Job Group's report about social media use at workplace which was based on 1000 respondents in UK. 55% respondents admitted to accessing social networking sites while at workplace. 16% respondents spent over 30 minutes on these sites while another 6% spent an hour or more per day (Broughton, et. al, 2011). As the level recorded is high, it is advisable for both employees and employers to control the use of social media at workplace to ensure that productivity of the department will not be jeopardized. This is because working hours should be fully utilized for working purposes only. Social media can be accessed at workplace but not excessively. Moreover, Broughton, et. al, (2011) revealed that 11% of the respondents admitted that they are less productive due to using social media at workplace. Therefore, prevention is always better than cure.

**RQ 2:** What are the motives in social media use intensity at workplace among the employees?

**Table 2: Mean score of motives in social media use intensity at workplace**

Dimensions	N	Mean	SD	Level
Entertainment	30	3.467	0.693	High
Interpersonal	30	3.475	0.658	High
Learning	30	3.467	0.663	High

\*1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5= Strongly agree

The study utilised three dimensions of motives for social media use. All the three motives are considered as high level as the mean scores are over 3.33. However, out of all three motives, interpersonal motive emerged as the highest motive with  $M=3.475$ ,  $SD=0.658$ . It is followed by entertainment motive,  $M=3.467$ ,  $SD=0.693$  and learning motive,  $M=3.467$ ,  $SD=0.663$ . These findings matched with Leila et al.'s (2014) study on Malaysian university students that revealed "Interpersonal Utility" (31.40%), followed by "Information seeking" (30.30%), "Entertainment (29.90%) as the three most dominant motives in social media use.

Indeed, the fact that people use social media mainly for interpersonal motive is not something new as shown in previous studies done by Kuss and Griffiths' (2011) and Kujath (2011). They found that majority of their respondents used social media for the maintenance of offline relationships, whereas some preferred to use this type of Internet application for communication rather than face-to-face interaction.

Nowadays, technology is the new medium of communication as it can bring people from million miles away to connect with loved ones with just a few clicks away. With technologies evolving every day, people opt for this medium as it made everything easier for them. Besides communication, it also serves as a medium of entertainment and learning. Users can access many things from their devices as long as they are connected to the internet. Hence, based on the findings above, it can be concluded that employees use social media mainly for interpersonal motive in order to keep up with their friends and to express themselves freely rather than for job purposes.

**RQ 3:** Is there any significant difference between social media use intensity at workplace and gender?

**Table 3: Independent sample t-test results for social media use intensity at workplace and gender**

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Social media use intensity	Male	14	3.448	0.378	-0.771	28	.0343
	Female	16	3.614	0.393			

Table 3 shows that mean score of social media use intensity at workplace obtained by female executives ( $M=3.614$ ,  $SD=0.393$ ) was higher than male executives ( $M=3.448$ ,  $SD=0.378$ ). To determine whether the mean scores are significantly different, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The results revealed that there was no statistical significant difference in the mean scores of male and female executives [ $t(28)=-0.771$ ,  $p=.0343$ ]. This means that gender does not influence the social media use intensity at workplace. However, this findings contrasted with Bujala's (2012) research that found male are more intense social media users with 12.08 hours spent in using it per week compared to 9.05 hours among female.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that the level of social media use intensity at workplace was high. Besides, the motive for using social media was mainly interpersonal. However, no statistically significant difference

was found between social media use intensity and gender. The results indicate that social media has become an inseparable part in people's life of all walk of ages. Therefore, everyone has to control themselves from being addicted to social media. The organisation via Human Resource department should construct and implement a firm policy regarding social media use at workplace. This is due to the worry that excessive amount of time spent on social media would affect the staffs' productivity. The employees on the other hand should take their jobs more seriously and should restrain themselves from using social media at workplace during working hours.

For further studies, social media use intensity at workplace and motives behind social media use at workplace should be studied with larger population and sample size that comprise of organisations in public and private sectors. It should also be studied using mixed methods approach to enable more in-depth findings pertaining to these issues.

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