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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine Internet users' experience and gratifications of social media, which affect the utilization of the medium. The research model was developed in hierarchical multiblock, which consists of three key psychological components – personal, tension release and social – that are derived from the Uses and Gratifications theoretical perspective. Data were collected through stratified probability sampling of 428 social media users using a web-based questionnaire. They were selected because they spend a significant amount of time on social media sites, at least for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram. Based on hierarchical multiblock PLS analysis, the results confirmed that social media utilization is affected by three key component psychological factors. All of these factors play a significant part in influencing user attitude towards utilizing social media. The findings are believed to increase understanding, especially for user-experience designers (UXD) concerning venues that can be used for direct targeting in designing social media marketing. The implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS

- i. Social Media
- ii. Social Media Behaviour
- iii. Uses and Gratifications
- iv. Multiblock Hierarchical Construct Analysis
- v. Adoption

UNCOVERING PSYCHOLOGICAL GRATIFICATIONS AFFECTING SOCIAL MEDIA UTILIZATION: A MULTIBLOCK HIERARCHICAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

In many ways, social media epitomises what the web is all about: collaborating and sharing content, ideas and information. It lays behind the explosion of content on the Internet, as various channels have allowed anyone with an Internet connection to create and share content easily and for free. Social media has profoundly changed the human experience with computers at large. In recent years, the popularity of the social media has captured considerable attention, especially concerning adoption and utilization. Internet users rapidly adopt and utilize social media to enhance social lives, promote sharing, and communication with friends, family, and the rest of the world. Social media, like any other media, focuses on bringing information, sharing photos, videos and other content to the Internet user who wants to learn and be entertained (Momany & Alshboul, 2016; Eggers, Hatak, Kraus, & Niemand, 2017). What makes social media different is that the content is not generated as a marketing monologue, such as print and electronic advertising and company websites, but as a conversation in which all participants have the ability to contribute to the development of the content and discussion as well as to edit or rate the content of social media (Strauss & Frost, 2012). It is a locus of social interaction that evolves and changes over time, which reflects the dynamics of the social networks and communities that Internet users build (Zeynep, 2008).

Researchers and marketers have mutually agreed that media is 'king', however, the extent to which traditional and social media influence markets remains open. Despite the similar aims of both media, their impacts on market outcomes are varied. According to Roy (2016), there are five immense differences between traditional and social media namely; (i) the targeted audience of social media reaches maximum coverage, while traditional media is generally more targeted, (ii) social media content is flexible as writers and readers can easily make changes even when published, whereas for traditional media, once it is published, no changes can be made, (iii) social media availability is immediate, while traditional media can be delayed due to press time, (iv) social media is two-way communication while traditional media is one-way, and finally, (v) social media often has unreliable demographic data or sources, but traditional media is more accurate. Roy (2016) added that even though social media is the burning Internet platform and an important communication tool in recent years, traditional media is still relevant as in some circumstances, social media cannot easily replace. Indeed, considering these two media platforms as mixed media may help marketers become better content strategists.

In another view, Dewan and Ramaprasad (2014) noted that social media, driven by user-generated content is starting to complement traditional media in terms of the way consumers learn and use products and services. They argued that the domination of social media over traditional media had changed consumer behaviour and impacting the marketing industry. For instance, social media influences business transactions through electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) while the social interactions influence decisions to buy (Dhar & Chang, 2009). Equally, recommendations from

acquaintances and positive feedback via social media improve consumer decisions to engage in purchase decisions (Dewan & Ramaprasad, 2014; Eggers et al., 2017). In a similar vein, Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels (2009) found that the effect of WOM through social media lasts longer than the effects of traditional media marketing.

The above leads to the motivation for this study to focus on social media in explaining gratification needs that influence utilization. Indeed, Eggers et al. (2017) argued that using social media enables firms to actively engage with consumers than the traditional communication approaches. This presents an opportunity for a paradigm shift in marketing toward the use of social media as a significant communication tool for marketers. Hence, this study focuses specifically upon social media by following the work of Smock, Ellison, Lampe, and Wohn (2011), Menon and Sigurdsson (2016), and Eggers et al. (2017).

This study is also motivated by the social media experience that derives from the availability of the enormous amounts of user-generated content (UGC) incorporated within it. Also, in explaining media experience, it has been observed from earlier research that Internet users use media for psychological reasons to satisfy needs and gratifications (Dholakia, Bagozzi, & Pearo, 2004; Eggers et al., 2017). Based on this fact, the media is conventionally seen as a two-pronged tool that (i) enables users to experience the medium, while, at the same time (ii) consumers require gratification from the usage and media benefits (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2003; Dewan & Ramaprasad, 2014). In justifying this, it is noted that Internet users use media for a purposive benefit that involves active behavioural control in which media content is sought because of internal motivations (Eastin & Daugherty, 2005; Eggers et al., 2017). These internal motivations are to meet specific needs and serve as the basis of attitude formation (Allport, 1967; O'Keefe, 2002; Daugherty, Eastin & Bright, 2008). In line with this, previous research found that psychological gratifications that Internet users gain through media are strong predictors of media usage (Katz, Haas, & Gurevitch, 1973; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Chen, 2011).

Numerous studies have shown great interest in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) in classifying media psychological gratifications among users for personal motives, immediate and deferred gratification, informational-educational, fantasist-escapist entertainment, seeking enjoyment, and also as a means to connect or disconnect from reality (Kaye, 2004; Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010; Ledbetter, Taylor, & Mazer, 2016). Basically, UGT suggests that people gained gratifications through social media, which satisfy their informational, social, and leisure needs (Dunne et al., 2010; Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). This theory emphasizes that different users use the same or different media for various purposes according to affective and cognitive responses toward the media (Katz et al., 1973; Smock et al., 2011; Phua et al., 2017). As social media continues to provide users with a wide range of interactive platforms and UGC, UGT is applicable to justify the psychological gratifications that users develop towards social media (Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2010; Ledbetter et al., 2016; Phua et al., 2017). Nevertheless, as noted by Momany and Alshboul (2016), as well as Eggers et al. (2017), evidence of social media usage behavior is not exclusively referring to a specific social media but reflects social media as a whole because the concept of social media is comparable regardless of social media platform types (e.g.: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, etc.). For

instance, Chen (2011) applied UGT to examine the need to connect with other people using Twitter, while Kaye (2010) studied reasons for accessing blogs based on UGT reasoning. Both studies revealed the suitability of UGT in answering their research questions and at the same time, UGT was verified to explain user needs and motives to engage in social media. However, limitations from Chen (2010) and Kaye (2010) studies are related to the applicability of UGT through another medium such as Facebook. Thus, motivating the present study to investigate the relevance of UGT in explaining Facebook users' gratification needs in their social media usage. Besides, Ledbetter et al. (2016) uses UGT to confirm user attitudes toward enjoyment as an effective moderator to predict the frequency of media utilization, whereas Phua et al. (2017) examined the ability of four social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, & Snapchat) in bridging and bonding social capital based on UGT in the United States. With regard to the application of UGT in terms of traditional and social media, UGT seems to work well and able to provide underlying justifications on why and how media audience sought gratifications from social media utilization.

To be sure, these studies also showed that UGT is appropriately suitable to be used and further explained the users' gratification needs for Facebook users. Even though the latter studies conducted research using Facebook users, emphasis on gratification needs is less explored in depth. As such, Ledbetter et al. (2016) asserted that attitude to enjoyment is the predictor to determine the frequency of media use but overlook the importance of other dimensions (in UGT) such as social and tension release gratification. In this study, enjoyment is treated as the sub-scale of personal gratification, other than trendiness, entertainment, and interactivity. Despite the fact that Phua et al. (2017) compared four social media in influencing social capital, an in-depth explanation on UGT for each social platform and the extent to which UGT relates to media utilization remain unclear. Interestingly, despite the lack of clarification on the UGT within four media platforms, Phua et al. (2017) positively noted that UGT is suitable to be used regardless of media platforms and the applicability of UGT is still the same for each. With that, the use of UGT in explaining social media utilization via Facebook is also prevalent to be used for other social media platforms as well as traditional media. Notwithstanding the applicability of UGT for traditional media as explored by Katz et al. (1973), thus, the context of this study can be repeated in future studies by considering the appropriateness of UGT within both media.

In addition, this theory is also predicted to explain the factors that motivate users to utilize social media based on needs and motives, thus enlightening the user-experience concerning how to devise social media marketing effectively. Even though there are a number of predicting motivations that explain social media usage and utilization (Dunne et al., 2010; Chen, 2011; Smock et al., 2011), this study revisits the above-mentioned factors that have been discussed, re-aligning it and henceforth, put the focus on the gratification needs. These needs are then categorised into three blocks that are: (i) personal, (ii) social, and (iii) tension release gratification (West & Turner, 2010). The original constructs of gratification need as explained by Katz et al. (1973) are cognitive, affective, personal, social, and tension release needs. Cognitive needs are mainly referring to the act in acquiring information and knowledge to aid the thinking and understanding process, whereas affective needs are related to emotion, pleasure, and feelings. These two needs are less significant to be studied in social media context as they are best used to

describe traditional media such as television, video, and movies (see West and Turner, 2010). Hence, the other three factors are employed as independent variables and act as the main motives that explain why Internet users engage and utilize social media.

The antecedents of usage motivations are crucial to marketers as users are their potential consumers. From simple interactions (chat) in learning about products and services, to prompt feedback received are key features that justify the importance of social media to marketers. Not only that, the gratification needs of social media users are a secret weapon for marketers, so that, they could know what to expect and take actions in attracting prospective consumers. Moreover, different needs and behavioural actions require different approaches in implementation, which allow firms to proactively outperform their competitors. Additionally, this study extends the UGT theory by proposing a new set of social media behavioural predictors that help to create further understanding of what makes people engage and utilise social media. Therefore, by incorporating three main constructs namely; personal, social, and tension release; this study integrates sub-scales for each construct with additional ten dimensions to constitute UGT that will be further explained in the hierarchical multiblock model in a subsequent section.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) redefines how and why individuals use the media; explains motivational needs by which users select media, channel, and content; and also describe subsequent attitudinal and behavioural effects (Rubin & Perse, 1987; Ruggiero, 2000; Lee & Ma, 2012). UGT assumes that users are goal-directed in their behaviour and are aware of their media needs. Katz et al. (1973) noted that general assumptions of UGT are: (i) media users are not passive consumers, rather, they have power over their media consumption, (ii) have active roles in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives, and (iii) different types of media will compete against each other and against other sources of gratification to gain viewers' attention. Unlike other theoretical perspectives, UGT affirms that media users are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and satisfy their needs in achieving gratification.

The key concept of UGT is that the choice individuals make when consuming media motivates their desire to gratify a range of needs. Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) argue that when a medium provides or surpasses expected gratifications of media users that they initially sought, this leads to the recurrent use of the medium and eventually to a degree of predictable consumption habits to occur. In UGT, the basic human needs that interact with individual characteristics refer to psychological setup, social position, life history and society, which includes a media structure that produces perceived problems and perceived solutions to users. The problems and expected solutions are modelled into motives for communication and lead to media utilization. In doing so, the media usage and consequences are placed within the larger context of individual everyday social habits and routines, thereby suggesting ways in which motivations and traits lead to the consumption of the media over other avenues for the fulfilment of individual needs (Smock et al., 2011; Weng & Ding, 2012; Phua et al., 2017).

The categorization of UGT by Katz et al. (1973) is widely used in media research. Katz et al. (1973) use UGT to analyse mass media gratification in detail, which covers five important media – television, radio, magazines, books, and cinema. Katz et al. (1973) listed 35 needs drawn from the social and psychological functions of mass media and categorized as cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative and tension release needs. These needs have been employed in many studies to understand the uses and consequences of various media (Cheung et al., 2010; Smock et al., 2011; Lee & Ma, 2012). The strength of UGT in Katz et al. (1973) lies in its applicability to a variety of media contexts. It shares a frame of analysis that focuses on motives, social and psychological antecedents, and cognitive, attitudinal or behavioural outcomes (Palmgreen, 1984; Ruggiero, 2000; Severin & Tankard, 2010).

The closest past studies that can be used to understand the needs and gratifications for social media utilization are by Perse and Courtright (1993), Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), Charney and Greenberg (2002), Stafford, Stafford, and Schkade (2004), Ko, Cho, and Roberts (2005), Chang, Lee, and Kim (2006), Quan-Haase and Young (2010), Cheung et al. (2010), Lee and Cho (2011), Ledbetter et al. (2016), and Phua et al. (2017) among others, who studied media uses and gratifications for the Internet or Internet-based media. These studies found that users use Internet-based media for entertainment, information, relaxation, surveillance, passing time and escapism, and newer online media needs for sociability, interaction, popularity, companionship, mobility, advancement, and convenience. Among them, purposive value, self-discovery, entertainment value, social enhancement, and maintaining interpersonal connectivity are the key media uses and gratifications that are widely adopted for online media (Cheung et al., 2010; Chen, 2011; Phua et al., 2017). However, different types of online media have different potential for motivating media involvement and utilization (Greenwald & Levitt, 1984; Eggers et al., 2017). The unique attributes of the media enhance and alleviate the effects of media involvement.

To focus explicitly on media uses and gratifications, this research further expands UGT by conducting a context-centric review of the existing literature relevant to online media, specifically the social media. The existing literature that employed UGT examines media motives with the relevant psychological antecedents to identify the consequences or effects associated with the media consumption. A number of relevant past empirical findings pertaining to online media uses and gratifications is presented in Table 1. This study contends that some of these needs are relevant to the current context of research due to the inherent participatory nature of social media that exists in the online platform. It is also worth to note that application of UGT is consistently similar either using traditional or social media as indicated by Phua et al. (2017).

Table 1: Summary of Relevant Empirical Findings on Online Media Uses and Gratifications

Source	Medium	Media Needs
Perse & Courtright (1993)	Computer-Mediated Communication	Entertainment, Relaxation, Self-Awareness, Excitement
Perse & Dunn (1998)	Computer	Entertainment, Learning, Social Interaction,

		Escapism, Passing Time, Out of Habit
Kaye (1998)	Internet	Entertainment, Passing Time, Escapism, Social Interaction, Information, Website Preference
Parker & Plank (2000)	Internet	Companionship, Social Relationship, Surveillance, Excitement, Relaxation, Escapism
Papacharissi & Rubin (2000)	Internet	Entertainment, Passing Time, Interpersonal Utility, Information Seeking, Convenience
Stafford et al. (2004)	Internet	Entertainment, Search Factor, Cognitive Factor, News, Unique Factors
Charney & Greenberg (2002)	Internet	Division Entertainment, Peer Identity, Good Feelings, Coolness, Keep Informed, Communication, Sights and Sounds, Career
Papacharissi (2002a)	Personal Homepage	Entertainment, Passing Time, Information, Self-Expression, Professional Advancement, Communication with Friends and Family
Kaye & Johnson (2002)	Political Uses of Website	Entertainment, Guidance, Surveillance, Social Utility
Ko et al. (2005)	Internet	Entertainment, Social Interaction, Information, Convenience
Didi & La Rose (2006)	Internet News	Entertainment, Escapism, Habit, Passing Time, Surveillance, News Quizzes
Haridakis & Hanson (2009)	Video-Sharing Website	Convenient, Entertainment, Convenient Information, Co-Viewing, Social Interaction
Quan-Haase & Young (2010)	Facebook – Instant Messaging	Passing Time, Sociability, Social Information, Fun, Relationship Maintenance, Relationship Development
Lee & Cho (2011)	Social Media via Mobile Broadband	Entertainment, Interactivity, Mobility, Passing Time, Substitute, Companionship, Solitude, Popularity
Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman (2011)	Social Media	Personal Integrative Needs, Social Integrative Needs, Tension Release Needs

Based on Table 1, this study is more exhaustive than prior studies in at least three ways. First, the incorporation of UGT as an underlying theory facilitates the understanding of how each gratification motivates users to engage in social media. Even though prior studies on social media adopted UGT to explain the users' needs and motives (Dunne et al., 2010; Smock et al., 2011; Ledbetter et al., 2016; Phua et al., 2017), limited studies had focused on the specific types of gratifications. Rather, more frequently, past studies had discussed UGT in social media using general typology such as personal motives, creating a persona, relaxing entertainment, among others which is accurately categorized as personal gratifications. Thus, extra attention is paid relative to distinct types of gratifications namely; personal, social, and tension release gratifications for a clearer view of UGT adoption in social media.

Second, this study looks at the gratification needs through three gratifications which are distinctly adequate to explain why and how users engage in social media. Also, the incorporation of sub-dimensions of each gratification enlightens marketers to practically attract users to utilize a particular media platform. Finally, this study employs structural equation modelling (SEM) to examine the dynamic relationships between gratification needs and social media utilization for a more comprehensive statistical significance. Also, the use of Partial Least Squares (PLS) is useful for explanation of structural relationships and describe the predictive validity of the proposed model. Overall, this study offers significant insights of relevance to the domains of social media marketing and communications.

RESEARCH MODEL

This study provides a holistic view of social media usage highlighting which factors may drive consumers to utilize social media. It is noted that personal, social, and tension release as gratification needs stimulate social media usage and believed to influence utilization while depending on the cruciality of the needs and motives to engage in such usage. Specifically, in this study, social media utilization is operationalized as the use of social media by looking at the number of social media used, and the frequency of usage adopted from Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman (2015), and Eggers et al. (2017).

From the summary of previous studies in Table 1, it seems evident that personal, social and tension release stimulate utilization, which is believed to change depending on the cruciality of needs and motives in social media usage. As a result, this study examines a holistic view of social media utilization and gratification needs that cover the abovementioned components in which emphasis is given to what drives users to utilize social media. It explores the perceived consequences of the social media usage, a representation of the social media effect on behaviour and expressions in performing the behaviour. This study adopts a parsimonious approach by classifying the psychological needs to media based on three categories proposed by Katz et al. (1974) and McQuail (1979). These categories are the first order construct that consists of personal, social and tension release needs, each of which are discussed in the following sections.

Personal Gratifications

Based on Katz et al. (1974), personal gratifications are defined as an individual's desire to appear credible, confident, and project high self-esteem. These needs are closely related to an individual's value system. Trendiness, enjoyment, entertainment, and interactivity are dimensions to represent personal gratifications construct. All of these dimensions are rooted in the well-known construct that explains personal gratifications as an antecedent for social media utilization, which is supported by Leung (2001), Charney and Greenberg (2002), Papacharissi (2002), and Lee and Cho (2011). Trendiness is operationalised as the extent to which an individual perceived themselves to get involved in the latest (technological) trends (Boyd & Mason, 1999; Chryssochoidis & Wong, 2000; Van Rijnsoever & Donders, 2009). Enjoyment is operationalized as happiness, pleasure and flow when using any medium (Lin, Gregor, & Ewing, 2008). Entertainment is operationalized as the way social media serves as a means for entertaining and escaping pressure (Lee & Ma, 2012) while interactivity is operationalized as a process of message exchange (Song & Zinkhan, 2008). Given the above, it is predicted that personal gratifications (trendiness, enjoyment, entertainment, interactivity) contribute to social media utilization as hypothesized below:

H1: Personal gratifications (trendiness, enjoyment, entertainment, interactivity) received from social media usage leads to social media utilization.

Social Gratifications

Social gratifications are defined in accordance with the definition provided by Katz et al. (1974), which noted that affiliation needs are where the participant intends to be part of a group, wants to be recognized as part of the group and relates to a sense of belonging. It is based on the argument of previous studies that motivation identifies the significance of social connections as a motivator for and benefits from participating in online media (Haddock & Zanna, 1999; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; Phang, Kankanhalli, & Sabherwal, 2009). In addition, social influence and social interaction motivate media uses as supported by Perse and Dunn (1998), Kaye (1998), Leung (2001), Kaye and Johnson (2002), and Quan-Haase and Young (2010). Social influence is operationalized as the degree to which a consumer perceives that important others believe he or she should use certain technology (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). Meanwhile, social interaction is operationalized as communication that occurs between two or more individuals, in which each person is aware of both his or her own membership in the group and relationships to and with others that belong to the group and in which the interactions occur primarily through an Internet venue to achieve mutually shared goals (Bagozzi, Dholakia, & Pearo, 2007). As a result, this study predicts that social gratifications (social influence and social interaction) influence social media utilization, as hypothesized below:

H2: Social gratifications (social influence and social interaction) received from social media usage leads to social media utilization.

Tension Release Gratifications

According to Kohut (1977), the human organization of experience is composed of the need for grandiosity, the need for idealization and the need for an alter ego or belongingness. This conception emphasizes the relationship between the self and self-objects, which are the cognitive representations of other people and their actions towards developing an attitude. It provides the structure and motivation for the tension release needs for this research. Tension release needs are defined as the need for escape and diversion from problems and routines (Katz et al., 1974). In line with Parker and Plank (2000), Leung (2001), Papacharissi (2002), as well as Diddi and La Rose (2006), dimensions to assess tension release gratifications are belongingness, companionship, playfulness, and escapism.

Belongingness is operationalized as being to avoid feelings of loneliness and alienation (Kohut, 1984). UGT stresses that individuals interact with other media users to achieve a sense of belonging (Rubin & Windahl, 1986). Companionship is operationalized as the feeling of being together and being a member of a group of friends, spending time together, socializing and networking (Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002). Meanwhile, playfulness is operationalized as the degree to which a current or potential user believes that the social site will bring a sense of pleasure (Sledgianowski & Kulviwat, 2009) whereas escapism is operationalized as the extent to which the user becomes so absorbed that they tend to fulfil their desire to 'leave' the reality in which they live in a cognitive and emotional way (Henning & Vorderer, 2001). Thus, this study assumed that tension release gratifications (companionship,

belongingness, playfulness, escapism) contribute to social media utilization, as hypothesized below:

H3: Tension release gratifications (companionship, belongingness, playfulness, escapism) received from social media usage leads to social media utilization.

Figure 1 shows the proposed model of three-block gratifications, which consists of the key dependent construct – social media utilization; while personal, social, and tension release gratifications complete the model as the determinants.

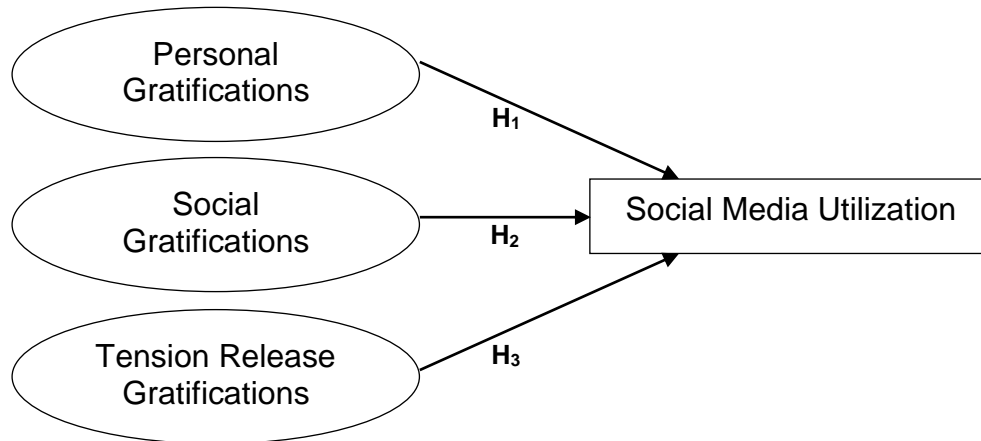


Figure 1: Hypothesized Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the nature of this study, accessibility to the target audience, and facilities available, this study employed online survey, which involved a web-based questionnaire for the data collection process. The respondents, who are Malaysian Internet users were selected using convenience sampling. The link to access the online survey was posted on Facebook pages using the survey monkey software. To increase the response rate and encourage participation, respondents were offered the opportunity to enter a draw to win shopping vouchers, which were given to ten randomly selected respondents. The online survey was activated for eight weeks using the English language as a medium. Overall, the total number of respondents was 428

The questionnaire was pre-tested and pilot-tested on 20 and 100 respondents, respectively. With regard to the pre-test, a review panel of seven individuals consisting of Professors, Associate Professors, colleagues, marketers, and practitioners was gathered to determine the validity of the questionnaire. After a short discussion on the purpose of the study, its research design, and the expected findings, panel members were asked to review the questionnaire. The review process was conducted to ensure that all dimensions and items in the questionnaire were in accord with the conceptual definition of the constructs. The number of questions vary dependent upon construct operationalization and led to 54 items in the questionnaire as indicated in Table 2. Then, panel members were asked to provide recommendations in terms of the need for items to be revised or deleted and

identify any grammatical errors or syntax issues. At the end of the review process, minor revisions were made in replacing words to avoid vagueness or ambiguity as well as re-designing the layout. No items proposed were dropped altogether, which allowed the items to be used for the pilot test.

The pilot test was performed to test understandability of the questionnaire using small samples (100 respondents) via the online-based platform. After this process, Cronbach’s alpha statistics were used to assess the reliability of the scales while exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was used to check the construct (discriminant and convergent) validity of the scales. All the constructs in the study were analysed using multiple items. The content validity of the constructs was verified by examining the pre-tested and pilot tested scales. Following Churchill (1979), existing scales were modified accordingly to fit the local context. Most of the constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The dependent variable of this study is social media utilization. The construct was measured using two indicators such as “number of social media used” and “frequency of media usage” (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015; Eggers et al., 2017). The frequency of usage was evaluated using 7-point scale namely; daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually, or never. Measurements used to assess dependent and independent constructs were taken from a number of previous studies as summarized in Table 2.

Since this study adapted items from various studies, factor analysis was performed to determine the underlying structure of the variables before proceeding with subsequent analysis. The conditions for suitability of the data were examined using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) for sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity (BTS) for the correlations among variables (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). KMO indices should be >0.50 (KMO=0.906) and BTS should be significant at *p*-value 0.000 (*p* = 0.000). Thus, allowing data validation enabled readiness for further analysis. In summary, personal gratifications were measured using trendiness, enjoyment, entertainment, and interactivity; while social gratifications were assessed by looking at social influence and social interaction; whereas tension release gratifications were evaluated using companionship, belongingness, playfulness, and escapism. These constructs and dimensions are prepared using hierarchical constructs or also known as Higher Order Construct (HOC) for further statistical analysis. This study uses multidimensional constructs predicted to relate to other constructs involving more than one dimension (Chin, 1998; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013).

Table 2: Summary of measurement and sources

Construct	Items	Sources
Social media utilization	8	Srinivasan et al. (2002); Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman (2015)
Personal Gratification		
▪ Trendiness (TRN)	3	Boyd & Mason (1999), Chrysochoidis & Wong (2000), Van Rijnsoever & Donders (2009)
▪ Enjoyment (ENJ)	7	Lin et al. (2008)
▪ Entertainment (ENT)	5	Chen, Gillenson, & Sherrell (2002), Dholakia et al. (2004)

▪ Interactivity (INT)	4	Song & Zinkhan (2008)
Social Gratification		
▪ Social Influence (SIF)	5	Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), Davis (1989), Venkatesh et al. (2003), Dholakia et al. (2004)
▪ Social Interaction (SIN)	5	Sun et al. (2008), Haridakis & Hanson (2009)
Tension Release		
▪ Companionship (COM)	6	Foster, Francescucci, & West (2010), Parker & Plank (2000), Dholakia et al. (2004)
▪ Belongingness (BLG)	5	Lee & Robbins (1995)
▪ Playfulness (PLY)	3	Lin, Wu, & Tsai (2005) Sledgianowski & Kulviwat (2009)
▪ Escapism (ESC)	3	Parker & Plank (2000)

A PLS path modelling technique was used to analyse the research model. This technique was originally presented by the founder of the PLS regression (Wold, 1985), and further developed by (Lohmoller, 1989). As explained by Hair et al. (2011), PLS path modelling is a causal modelling approach that aims to maximise the explained variance of the dependent latent constructs. This technique is designed to reflect the theoretical and empirical characteristics of social sciences and behavioural characteristics (Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, & Lauro, 2005). PLS is also chosen because it is ideal for the early stages of theory development, and, as - in the case of this research, UGT is applied, tested and extended in the new online media context – social media.

The data analysis was run using SmartPLS 3.0 build by Ringle et al. (2005). The PLS technique also permits the simultaneous testing of the hypotheses while also measuring single and multiple items (Jarvis, Mackenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003). With regards to the indicators used to form each of the constructs of this model, and, in line with the criteria established by Chin (1998), this research found that all latent variable indicators were reflective. The analysis followed a two-step PLS process that involved separate assessments of (i) the measurement model, also known as the outer model, and (ii) the structural model, also known as the inner model.

The structure of the sample by gender was 40.7% males and 59.3% females, and by age, 3.0% of the respondents were aged below 20 years, 12.4% between 20 and 24, 55.1% between 25 and 34, 29% between 35 and 44 and 0.5% of the respondents were aged above 44 years old. All sample respondents had access to and habitually used social media. They had used social media for about four to six years and logged in several times a day. In general, the use of social media by the respondents was high.

RESULTS

Measurement Model

The evaluation of the measurement model is undertaken by confirming the reliability of each item, the reliability of the construct, the average variance extracted (AVE) and the discriminant validity of the indicators that are the measures of the latent variables (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000). This research model is hierarchical in nature and involves the first order and second order constructs. It has ten first-order constructs of which each represents a dimension of a second order construct (four for personal gratifications, four for tension release gratifications and two for social

gratifications) and three-second order constructs (personal gratifications, tension release gratifications, and social gratifications). Additionally, one dependent variable of the first-order construct (social media utilization). This study follows the methodology proposed by Wetzels, Odekerken-Schroeder & van Oppen (2009) in which the second order latent variables are reflectively related to all the indicators corresponding to the first order latent variables and with the first order latent variables (LVs) themselves, as shown in Figure 2.

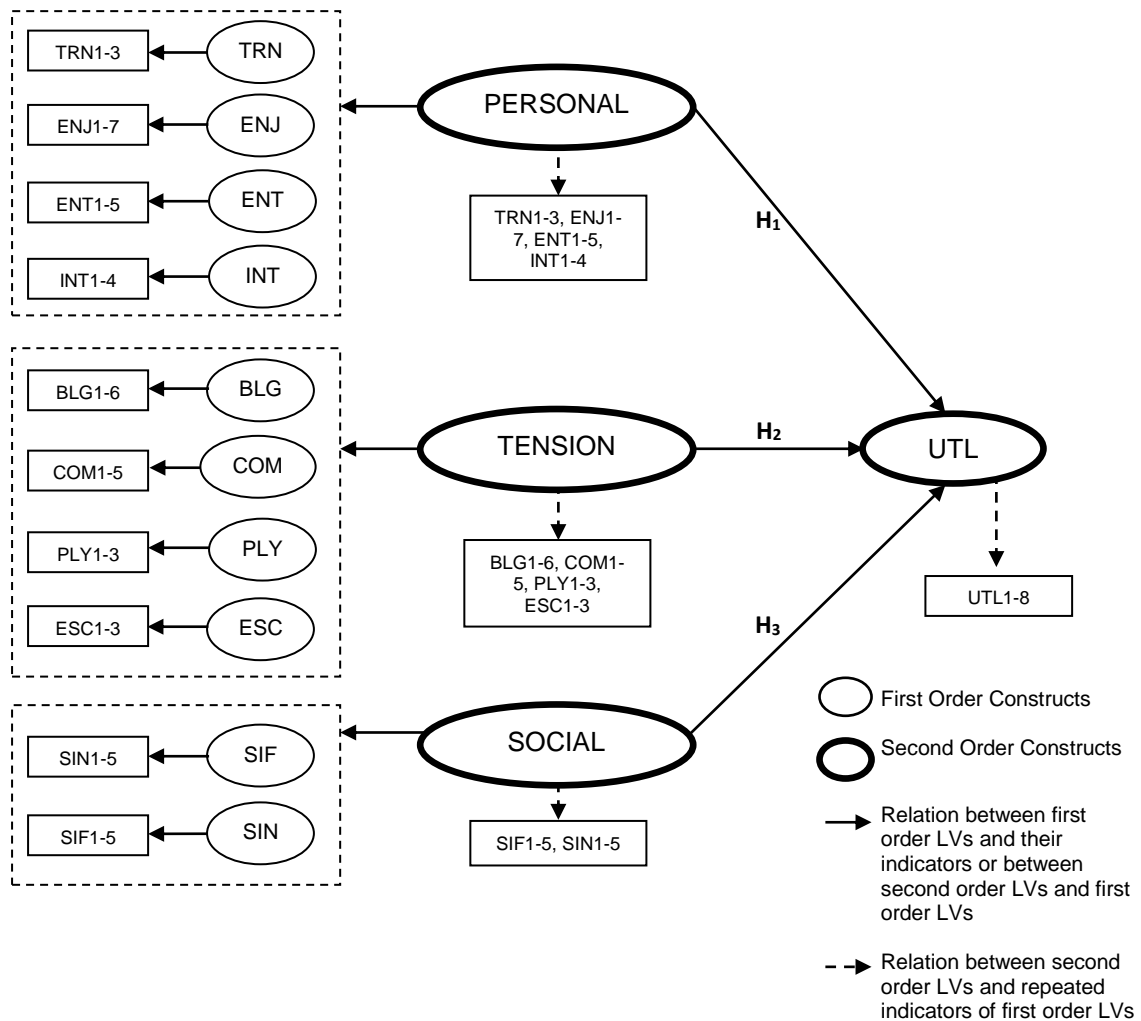


Figure 2: First and Second Order Constructs

Multi-Block Hierarchical Analysis

More precisely, the hierarchical model was constructed in the following order (Wetzels et al., 2009):

1. We constructed the first order latent variables for the trendiness (TRN), enjoyment (ENJ), entertainment (ENT) and interactivity (INT) of personal gratifications; for the belongingness (BLG), companionship (COM), playfulness (PLY) and escapism (ESC) of tension release gratifications; and for social influence (SIF) and social interaction (SIN) of social gratifications (see Table 2 for the indicators of each construct).

2. The second order constructs for personal gratifications (PERSONAL), tension release gratifications (TENSION) and social gratifications (SOCIAL) were built by relating each of them to the indicators of the corresponding first-order LVs. In the case of PERSONAL, they comprise the blocks of indicators corresponding to the LVs, which are TRN, ENJ, ENT and INT; for TENSION, the indicators of the LVs are BLG, COM, PLY and ESC; and for SOCIAL, the indicators of the LVs are SIF and SIN. The inner model that was created between the second order (PERSONAL, TENSION and SOCIAL) and the first order variables (TRN, ENJ, ENT, INT, BLG, COM, PLY, ESC, SIF and SIN) represent the second order loadings.
3. Those second-order constructs were related to the structural model with the construct UTL, which, in turn, was measured by a series of indicators with which it was reflectively related.
4. The model using the PLS path modelling was estimated, thus obtaining the first order loadings, second order loadings and the structural parameters. A bootstrap was also applied to obtain the standard errors and calculate the statistics that permit the analysis of the validity of the hypotheses.

After the hierarchical model was constructed, the analysis was undertaken by evaluating the individual reliability of the first order constructs by analysing factorial loading, composite reliability (CR) and AVE (Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2013). Table 3 displays those measures and each of the items used. The factorial loadings are all above 0.6937, indicating that at least 69% of the constructs' variance is reflected in the indicator (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2013). The CRs are >0.7, which shows a greater reliability value that is required for the initial stages of the reliability test (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The AVE by each construct from its indicators is >0.5, indicating that 50% or more of the variance of the indicator explained that the condition is more than satisfied in all cases (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3: Properties of the First Order Constructs

Items	Dimensions	Loadings	AVE	CR	CA
<i>Trendiness (TRN)</i>					
TRN1	I bother about technology	0.8894	0.7287	0.8893	0.8121
TRN2	New technology is fashionable	0.8793			
TRN3	I like to be seen using social media	0.7886			
<i>Enjoyment (ENJ)</i>					
ENJ1	It gives me contentment	0.8593	0.7765	0.9605	0.9522
ENJ2	It gives me a sense of satisfaction	0.8837			
ENJ3	It attracts my attention	0.857			
ENJ4	It is meaningful	0.885			
ENJ5	It focuses on life	0.9166			
ENJ6	It is rewarding	0.8816			
ENJ7	It is worth spending time	0.8839			
<i>Entertainment (ENT)</i>					
ENT1	It is flexible	0.8361	0.823	0.9587	0.9461
ENT2	It is stylish	0.9064			
ENT3	It is attractive	0.9342			
ENT4	It is cool	0.9255			
ENT5	It is full of excitement	0.9302			
<i>Interactivity (INT)</i>					
INT1	It is effective in gathering feedback	0.8628	0.6594	0.8853	0.8269

INT2	It processes feedback quickly	0.8551			
INT3	Social media is an interactive site	0.767			
INT4	It is easy to navigate	0.7574			
<i>Belongingness (BLG)</i>					
BLG1	I feel attached to my friends	0.8265	0.6217	0.9076	0.8774
BLG2	I feel a sense of connectedness with the world	0.7015			
BLG3	I feel a sense of brotherhood/sisterhood with my friends	0.7409			
BLG4	I feel a sense of connectedness with society	0.8028			
BLG5	I feel connected to the world around me	0.8288			
BLG6	I keep my friends close to me	0.8214			
<i>Companionship (COM)</i>					
COM1	It enables me to build my own social network	0.8119	0.5982	0.8814	0.8338
COM2	It enables me to expand my social network	0.7417			
COM3	It enables me to feel less lonely	0.7641			
COM4	It enables me to find friends	0.7292			
COM5	It enables me to meet others like me	0.8162			
<i>Playfulness (PLY)</i>					
PLY1	Using social media arouses my imagination	0.7968	0.6027	0.8196	0.6693
PLY2	Using social media is enjoyable	0.795			
PLY3	Using social media stimulates my curiosity	0.7356			
<i>Escapism (ESC)</i>					
ESC1	It enables me to get away from my problems	0.8261	0.6492	0.8461	0.742
ESC2	It enables me to relax myself	0.8854			
ESC3	Social media is a place for escapism	0.6937			
<i>Social Influence (SIF)</i>					
SIF1	People around me have influenced me to use social media	0.7523	0.5909	0.8783	0.8272
SIF2	People around me think to have me around would let me stay in contact with them	0.7822			
SIF3	People around me think I should have an account on social media	0.8011			
SIF4	People around me think it would be great if my name can be found on their friend's list	0.7608			
SIF5	I got to know about social media from people around me	0.7455			
<i>Social Interaction (SIN)</i>					
SIN1	I meet new people	0.7616	0.5715	0.8695	0.8133
SIN2	Social media is a place to socialize	0.7282			
SIN3	I express myself freely	0.7211			
SIN4	I fit in a group of people that share the same interests	0.7689			
SIN5	I get more points of view	0.7976			
<i>Social Media Utilization (UTL)</i>					
UTL1	My usage is active therefore I am a frequent user of social media	0.7049	0.6302	0.9314	0.9154
UTL2	I expect my social media usage to increase in the future	0.7928			
UTL3	My usage has benefited my life	0.8185			
UTL4	My usage has impacted my life	0.8592			
UTL5	My usage has substantially changed my life	0.8266			
UTL6	My usage is extensive; therefore, I continue to utilize it	0.8509			
UTL7	Overall, I adopt social media because of its usefulness	0.7541			
UTL8	Overall, I am satisfied with my social media usage	0.7296			

Note CR=Composite Reliability, AVE= Average Variance Extracted, CA=Cronbach's Alpha.

To confirm the discriminant validity, this study compared the square root of the AVEs (i.e. the values on the diagonal in Table 4) with the correlations between the constructs (i.e. the elements off the diagonal in Table 4). All the reflective constructs are more strongly related to their own measures than to other constructs. In addition, the cross-loadings were analysed and found to not be significant compared to the loadings (Hair et al., 2013). Table 5 includes the CRs and AVEs of the second order constructs. It can be seen that the CRs are >0.80 and the AVEs are >0.50, thus indicating that the second order constructs are reliable.

Table 4: The AVEs and the Correlation between the First Order Constructs

	TRN	ENJ	ENT	INT	BLG	COM	PLY	ESC	SIF	SIN	UTL
TRN	<i>0.854</i>										
ENJ	0.228	<i>0.881</i>									
ENT	0.224	0.722	<i>0.907</i>								
INT	0.643	0.251	0.280	<i>0.812</i>							
BLG	0.511	0.304	0.309	0.472	<i>0.788</i>						
COM	0.503	0.310	0.307	0.486	0.716	<i>0.773</i>					
PLY	0.323	0.336	0.296	0.293	0.558	0.604	<i>0.776</i>				
ESC	0.422	0.256	0.270	0.307	0.650	0.672	0.690	<i>0.806</i>			
SIF	0.491	0.190	0.172	0.450	0.564	0.520	0.404	0.460	<i>0.769</i>		
SIN	0.544	0.241	0.241	0.464	0.710	0.676	0.506	0.504	0.664	<i>0.756</i>	
UTL	0.373	0.326	0.313	0.363	0.554	0.545	0.485	0.497	0.404	0.482	<i>0.794</i>

All the correlations are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. The square roots of the AVEs are displayed on the diagonal in bold and italics

Table 5: Quality Criteria of Second Order Constructs

	AVE	CR	CA	PERSONAL	TENSION	SOCIAL	UTL
PERSONAL	0.767	0.975	0.972	<i>0.876</i>			
TENSION	0.535	0.937	0.927	0.330	<i>0.731</i>		
SOCIAL	0.501	0.900	0.876	0.223	0.713	<i>0.708</i>	
UTL	0.630	0.931	0.915	0.327	0.560	0.489	<i>0.794</i>

All the correlations are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. The square roots of the AVEs are displayed on the diagonal in bold and italics

Structural Model

The structural model, which is shown in Figure 3, together with the explained variance of the constructs (R^2) and the standardized coefficients (β) were analysed. The structural model was evaluated by examining the values of R^2 for predictive relevance, and the size of the path coefficients. The stability of the estimations was examined by using t -statistics, which were obtained by means of a bootstrap with 5000 samples (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). Table 6 displays the proposed hypotheses, the path coefficients, the t -values with the level of significance obtained in the bootstrap test, the explained variance (R^2) result and Goodness-of-Fit of structural equation modelling.

Table 6: Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

	SD	t-value	Path Coefficients	Empirical Conclusions	R ²	GoF
PERSONAL → UTL	0.041	3.645*	0.148	Supported		
SOCIAL → UTL	0.048	2.760*	0.132	Supported		
TENSION → UTL	0.061	7.408*	0.453	Supported		
					0.383	0.484

Note: * indicate significant level at $p < 0.001$, SD=Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error

With regards to the explained variance (R^2) of the latent variable UTL, the structural model shows adequate predictive power since the value obtained is at 0.383, in other words, 38.3% of the variance of UTL is explained (Hair et al., 2013). The results shown confirm that the measurement model is adequate and that the structural model has a satisfactory predictive relevance for the construct UTL.

Next, the value of effect size (f^2) was calculated to explore the impact of the predictor constructs on the endogenous construct while Q^2 was evaluated to measure the model's predictive validity (Hair et al., 2014). The proposed formula to find the results of f^2 and q^2 is $(R^2 \text{ included} - R^2 \text{ excluded}) / (1 - R^2 \text{ included})$. With regard to the model predictive relevance, the q^2 test was performed through blindfolding procedure. The f^2 and q^2 results ranging from 0.02 to 0.014 are considered as weak, while 0.15 to 0.34 are moderate, and above 0.35 are deemed to have strong effects and predictive capability (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 7: Results of f^2 and q^2

Endogenous	Social Media Utilization	
	f^2 value	q^2 value
Personal Gratifications	0.1029 (Small)	0.0307 (Small)
Social Gratifications	0.0624 (Small)	No effect
Tension Release Gratifications	0.1568 (Medium)	0.0655 (Small)

Based on Table 7, personal and social gratifications had small predictive values on social media utilization ($f^2=0.1029$, $f^2=0.0624$), while tension release gratifications showed medium effect ($f^2=0.1568$) in predicting social media utilization. In terms of the predictive relevance (q^2), only two dimensions of gratifications were able to predict social media utilization with small effects which are personal and tension release gratifications ($q^2 = 0.0307$, $q^2 = 0.0655$), whereas social gratifications showed no predictive relevance.

Finally, to guarantee the quality of the PLS model, the GoF test, which was recently developed for endogenous constructs (Tenenhaus et al., 2005; Wetzels et al., 2009), tests the geometric average of the mean communality and the mean R^2 . The GoF value for the complete model is at 0.484, which significantly exceeds the 0.25 cut-off value for a medium size, which indicates a satisfactory global fit (Wetzels et al., 2009).

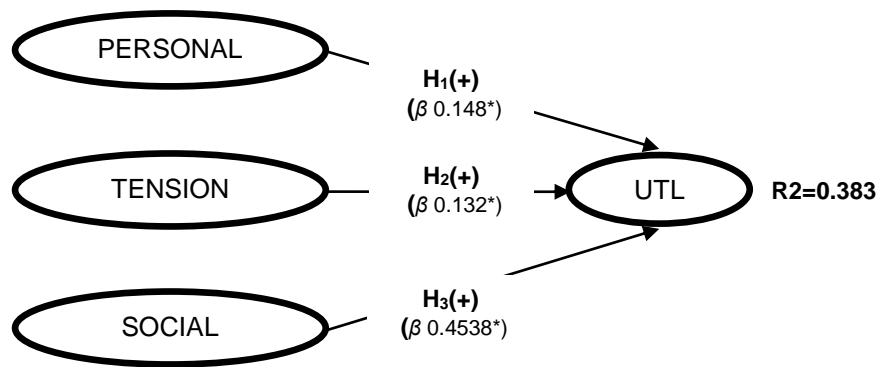


Figure 3: Estimated Causal Relationships in the Structural Model

DISCUSSION

This study proposed and obtained support for a new theoretical model that furthers our understanding of first-order constructs and its effect on social media utilization. Specifically, the psychological needs of media were confirmed to have three valid higher-order constructs that drive the utilization of social media – personal, social, and tension release gratifications (Katz et al., 1974; Blumler, 1979; Kaye, 2004; Severin & Tankard, 2010). In agreement with prior research on other psychological gratifications on online media that lead to usage and utilization, it is found that users tend to use social media for these three categories of psychological gratifications, which measure ten dimensions: (i) *trendiness*, (ii) *entertainment*, (iii) *enjoyment*, (iv) *interactivity*, (v) *social influence*, (vi) *social interaction*, (vii) *companionship*, (viii) *belongingness*, (ix) *playfulness*, and (x) *escapism*. The results were expected and in agreement with UGT studies on other online media (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Chang et al., 2006; Diddi & La Rose, 2006; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Lee & Cho, 2011), which can be used to validate these gratifications as influencing social media utilization.

Findings from this study revealed that among the three main psychological gratifications, tension release has the highest significance in influencing social media utilization, followed by personal and social gratifications. Since there are numerous motives that users owned before utilizing social media, there is a reason to believe that users decided to engage in social media in order to escape and distract themselves from problems and routines (Katz et al., 1974; Eggers et al., 2017). Contrary to previous studies, personal gratification is the main reason why users adopt social media (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Kim, Kim, Wang, & Lee, 2016; Fazal-e-Hasan, Lings, Mortimer, & Neale, 2017). However, by considering the samples of this study, the age group of the respondents are between 25 to 34 years old, thus indicating that they are the working population. This information might explain the reason why tension release is more significant than the personal gratification. This age group prefer to use social media for relaxation, maintain a relationship, and escapism from their work-related stress.

The conceptual ideas and supporting empirical evidence revealed in this research serve as the guiding parameters for the constructs of social media utilization, which have been integrated and rationalized to formulate a comprehensive and justifiable model. This approach would be of academic and practical use to understand

consumer behaviour related to social media. Personal, social and tension release gratifications are important constructs that influence the utilization of social media. Exploiting the potential and unique feature of social media arouses user gratifications; this categorization should be the target category for marketers to increase the consumer social media experience via effective social media marketing campaigns. This categorization could also help marketers identify the attributes of social media that they can use to emphasize when using social media as a point of contact with consumers.

CONCLUSION

The present study contributes to extant research in several ways. First, to our knowledge, this study was drawn from the diverse literature of media that investigates the antecedents of social media utilization. Specifically, the conceptualization and research model allows the influence of different types of social media uses and gratifications to be further explored. Second, the comprehensive higher order constructs yet parsimonious research model makes an important contribution to the emerging literature on social media behaviour, by grounding variables and applying them to a new context of social media study based on the dominant media theory – UGT. It furnishes detailed knowledge concerning the antecedents of media uses and gratifications derived from three basic psychographic categories – personal, social and tension release. As users gain experience with social media and its technology, more considerations emerged and gain significance in determining media utilization behaviour.

The identification of three categories of psychological gratifications of social media also allows marketers to optimize the probability of efficiently addressing social media users through a proper social media consumer needs typology based on these three psychological categories. It provides the potential for a much closer fit between marketers and heterogeneous social media users. Previously, in the area of market segmentation, marketers have traditionally dealt with heterogeneity by segmenting the market based on basic market segmentation – demographic, geographic, psychographic, behavioural and benefit (Barnes, Bauer, Neumann, & Huber, 2007; Peter & Olson, 2010; Strokes, 2009). However, on understanding that social media is unique in its own way, traditional segmentation could mislead marketers into reaching the right social media target market. The nature of social media has dissolved geographical boundaries, bringing businesses and consumers together in a low friction environment; hence, traditional market segmentation is likely to be unsuitable. Therefore, the typology of social media users based on personal, social and tension release needs can be used as an effective psychographic gratifications segmentation and targeting instrument. It also contributes to marketing activities tailored to meet the needs and expectations of consumers. In addition, communications directed toward potential consumers can be customized at an individual level. The media needs, which lead consumers to utilise social media, can serve as a basic understanding concerning how marketers can start connecting with consumers based on satisfying these needs.

Academic and Managerial Implication

This finding is crucial to marketers as it explains the attributes that social media users look when they deal, adopt and utilize their social media usage so that in return marketers know what to offer to them. For instance, in showcasing products and services, advertisements may exhibit a sense of fantasy and imagination to attract consumers to buy products/services. Also, opens an opportunity for marketers to offer products or services that incorporate a sense of belongingness, companionship, playfulness, and escapism such as the augmented reality virtual game, Pokemon Go, pet business, dealing with matchmaking business and so forth. As mentioned by Zhu and Chen (2015), United States (US) companies spent \$5.1 billion on media advertising but a Gallup survey revealed that advertisements had little influence on the majority of consumers buying decisions. Authors also noted that the loophole of this problem is caused by failure to identify market segments and potential psychological motives of users. Therefore, other than focusing on the products and services, marketers might also consider choosing social media platforms that can offer tension release gratifications such as YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, WeChat and so forth as medias to market their products and services. Nowadays, most marketers choose these platforms to target audiences and improve sales with investment in social media advertising (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Rodriquez, Ajjan, & Peterson, 2016).

From another angle, a number of researchers concluded that the most common reason for users to use social media is related to personal gratifications (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Eggers et al., 2017; Phua et al., 2017). Other than reflecting the users' desire to project high self-esteem through positive lifestyle postings and good images of themselves, these kinds of gratifications also involved the need for trendiness, enjoyment, entertainment, and interactivity. For instance, large companies have their sales specialists to correspond with prospects, clients, and other stakeholders via social media. The specialists will create a trend that inviting media audiences to buy products of the company so that the audience might be part of the trend (Rodriquez et al., 2016). This is one of the current waves of advertising skills targeting younger media users. So far, this method works in apparel, accessories, and gadgets, especially among teenagers. Based on a study by Saravanan and Nithyaprakash (2015), teenager's decision to buy is not to fulfil their needs or wants, but somehow to be part of a trend. In a way, this statement supports the second gratification of this study which is personal gratification in terms of trendiness.

The other sub-dimensions of personal gratifications are enjoyment, entertainment, and interactivity more or less reflecting quite the same objective. These gratifications are the trigger for the media users to continually using social media to gain happiness, pleasure, and leisure. Interestingly, a number of media users sought gratifications in terms of interactivity which they gain pleasure by exchanging message with other parties (Pelletier, 2005; Anderson, 2009; Kim, Shim, & Ahn, 2011). The excitement to get replies is the motivation for them to keep using social media. Thus, marketers need to apply this finding by constantly updating and responding to consumers. An active marketer portrays a high commitment and responsible which will gain high traffic and attract new prospects. In a long run, it will create a deeper and meaningful relationship with prospects and consumers (Rodriquez et al., 2016). The sample in this study treasures social gratifications as the least contentment from social media. From the statistics, it showed that a group-

based media or applications are not seen favourably by recent users. The idea to maintain the group and relationship among their members seems burdensome (Kim et al., 2011; Roy, 2014). Hence, marketers should consider this observation by avoiding this type of media platform as users are less interested to engage in social gratification media.

Limitation and Opportunities for Future Research

There are also some limitations here that warrant caution in the application the results. The first limitation concerns the context of the research as this research is specifically conducted in the Malaysian setting, which places constraints on the generalizability of the results to other countries. The general applicability of the findings for global consumers is limited due to the fact that usage and patterns were influenced by local culture, status and lifestyle. Future research should address cultural differences by examining cross-cultural issues. Furthermore, for future research, by extending this research model in a longitudinal study, it would provide the inferences for the cause and effect in the area of social media studies.

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