

Communication Difference between Men and Women in Social Media

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Abstract— The widespread use of social media affects the behavior and preferences of the contemporary users. Social Networking Sites offer a platform for males and females to present themselves in a way they would like to be seen by other people. Some authors indicate that self-presentation in social media differs across genders, with women placing a higher emphasis on the presentation of their profile and personal information. This paper focuses on the exploration of current literature to identify the major gender differences in social media use. Reviewing the current literature, the paper highlighted the major findings: females are wealthier but less risk-taking; females attract positive behavior; females demonstrate homophily, whereas men are heterophiles; males tend to slowly respond to female friendship initiatives; men spend less time in social networks than women, but use them more rationally. The analysis of the articles showed that the majority of them focus on the identification of gender differences in social media use, though psychological aspects should also be considered when studying this topic.

Introduction

The popularity of social media and social networks shapes the structural backbone of the modern society. The behavior of people in the socio-economic environment is essential to understand the major differences between women and men, because they perform different roles in different interconnected social networks. The current research reveals striking differences in behavior within social networks between men and women. Female representatives tend to respond to offers of friendship from persons of the opposite sex much faster than men. Before men respond to the aggressive actions of women, there is a long period of hesitation. Research shows that men and women use social networks differently. This difference exists in all things, starting with security and ending with the information they share with friends. On the network level, women tend to be more effective communication partners. It is important to understand the general differences between the way women and men use social networks to enhance the effectiveness of published materials. Whereas females tend to attack networks and be more effective in trade, males lack cooperative links. Given this information, this paper assumes that men and women communicate differently within their social networks.

Literature Review

Szell and Thurner (2013) explore the differences in behavior of men and women in social networks and factors that contribute to the occurrence of these differences. The study is based on the investigation of behaviors of an online-game society of nearly 300,000 players. The results presented by the authors reveal that females are wealthier but less risk-taking; females attract positive behavior; females demonstrate homophily, whereas men are heterophiles; males tend to slowly respond to female friendship initiatives. Homophily is considered by Szell and Thurner (2013) as the tendency of people to associate and connect with similar others. The use of quantitative methods allows the authors to effectively indicate the major differences in gender-specific behavior in a virtual world. Szell and Thurner (2013) state that on "the behavioral level females are more engaged in the reciprocation of their positive relations, again signaling that they invest more in stable and secure networks" (p. 5). Females demonstrate a higher coefficient in their communication networks, though males have more effective communication partners.

Thompson and Loughheed (2012) provide a study on gender differences in social network communication between men and women. The researchers assume that about 75% of young adults have at least one social networking profile. The

fact is that many teens and young users state that they spend vast amounts of time on Facebook and MySpace, which has a considerable impact on their psychological health. Exploring gender differences in social networking – for Facebook use in particular – Thompson and Loughheed (2012) identify that females spend more time on Facebook compared to males; frequently experience insomnia due to the use of Facebook; feel closer to virtual friends than to real ones; Facebook pictures result in the negative perceptions of self body image; Facebook is a cause of stress; and women tend to be sometimes addicted to the use of Facebook. The study is significant due to the findings it presents on gender differences in the use of social media, helping in understanding the impact of the use of social networking on emotional health of users.

Haferkamp, Eimler, Papadakis, and Kruck (2012) explore gender differences in the use of social networking and self-presentation from the psychological perspective. Women tend to focus more on the creation of a positive self-presentation in social networking, whereas men do not pay much attention to this aspect in face-to-face communication. In modern world, self-presentation is an important aspect among users, because they have to create their profiles and provide their own images and other personal information. The authors suggest that there are evident gender differences in terms of the use of social networking sites, as well as Internet behavior and communication. The findings of the study are obtained through the multimethodological study and reveal that females use their social media to compare themselves with others and to search for information. On the contrary, males tend to look at profiles of other people with the aim of finding friends. Another difference identified is the choice of photos for self-presentation – while females select portraits, males use full-body shots.

Sorokowski et al. (2016) investigate the use of social media from the psychological perspective, focusing on the connection between numerous uploaded selfies by users and individual personality differences. The researchers explore histrionic personality of users, i.e. personality scores associated with excessive attention-seeking, excessive need for approval, and inappropriate seductive behavior. A close correlation between aggregated number of selfies and histrionic personality scores is identified in men, while this correlation is not observed in women. The authors thus suggest that "selfies might be considered as a manifestation of maladaptive patterns of personality only among men" (Sorokowski et al., 2016, p. 371). There are gender differences in the selection of profile pictures among men and women on social media. Females are highly concerned with the self-reflecting and visual aspects of their

profile pictures, whereas males emphasize this factor less. This study also specifies that selfie posting is a strategy to attract attention, and that users tend to make self-presentation among friends rather than alone due to higher fear of self-presentation.

Continuing discussion on gender differences in self-presentation in social media, Oberst, Renau, Chamarro, and Carbonell (2016) examine the issue of gender stereotypes in relation to social media and their self-presentation on Facebook. The results of the study identify that users tend to present themselves in social media in a less gender stereotypical way, with females acting in such a way more often than males; high intensity use of Facebook demonstrates a negative impact on well-being of an individual; altered self-representation on social media affects personal well-being. In addition to the identification of these aspects, Oberst, Renau, Chamarro, and Carbonell (2016) highlight that the subjects of their research do not increase scores of their sex roles in their Facebook presentation, but considerably reduce these scores. The authors also point at the cultural dimension of Internet users, which can play an essential role in the behavior of males and females online.

Mazman and Usluel (2011) focus their research on gender differences of using Facebook and identify that both males and females use it with different purposes. Females use Facebook to follow agenda, to maintain existing relationships, and for academic purposes to a higher extent compared to males, whereas males use it to make new relationships more frequently than females. This phenomenon is explained by the tendency of women to hide their personal information and identities to keep their privacy within the Internet environment. Women do not disclose themselves to people they do not know due to traditional social roles and social pressure. duction of knowledge and meaning (Lind & Brzuz, 2008).

Analysis

The literature demonstrates the focus of the majority of articles on self-presentation of women and men in social media (Haferkamp, Eimler, Papadakis, & Kruck, 2012; Sorokowski et al., 2016; Oberst, Renau, Chamarro, & Carbonell, 2016) and major gender differences in communication (Szell & Thurner, 2013; Thompson & Lougheed, 2012; Mazman & Usluel, 2011). Though men and women use the social network for the same reasons and for some purposes, gender differences in this aspect are interesting. All of the studies agree that women use passwords to protect their devices less often than men. For professional purposes, women use social networks differently, in particular, they need to communicate with customers and to share information with them. Women are more willing to share pictures and posts on Facebook than men, but women are annoyed in relation to their Facebook friends. Women are more concerned about their online reputation and provide less personal information. All studies effectively discuss gender differences in social media use, offering valuable findings.

Conclusion

Current literature tends to identify similar aspects in gender differences in social media use and communication. The issue is really relevant, because women and men show different behavior in all spheres of life, and the use of social media is not an exception. Indeed, women are more concerned with their self-presentation compared to men, whereas men tend to focus on other aspects, such as finding friends. Men also actively use the advantages of social networks, but do it less often compared to women. Business men use social networks to study their competitors. They also use social networks to

expand their connections. Men spend less time in social networks than women, but use them more rationally. These differences are evident and supported by the majority of current literature, what validates the hypothesis on the existence of gender differences in the use of social media.

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