


Chapter 36

Unemployment, Personality Traits, and the Use of Facebook: Does Online Social Support Influence Continuous Use?


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ABSTRACT

Different personality traits respond differently to unfavourable life situations. Unemployment can have several negative social, economic, and domestic consequences. Many people use social media for a variety of reasons. The aim of this study is to examine the way different personality traits respond to Facebook in the period of unemployment. Data was obtained from 3,002 unemployed respondents in Nigeria. The study used regression model to analyse the data. Among the five personality traits, results indicated that the relationship between neuroticism and online social support was negative. However, the relationship between online social support and satisfaction was positive. The study highlights several theoretical and practical implications.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is a pervasive economic condition. Authorities at the international, national and municipal levels are all trying to keep the unemployment figure down to the minimum. It is a concern because when people are unemployed, it leads to several negative consequences such as social (e.g., crimes), economic (e.g., poverty) and domestic (e.g., relationship and family breakup) (Hooghe et al., 2010; Song et al., 2011; Siwach, 2018). Unemployment can lead to negative personality change (Boyce et al., 2015), thus, the individual's disposition to life begins to take a downward turn. Generally, a coping strategy is to resort to the encouragement of others in the period of misfortune with some personality traits more adaptable to change than others (Merema et al., 2013). Interestingly, self-disclosure, which is the art of disclosing one's personal information to others (Bazarova & Choi, 2014) plays a crucial role on the level of trust that communicating partners have with each other, and the amount of information they share. Accordingly, the more revealing information that the communicating partners provide to others, the more they will be trusted with confidential information.

To the best of our knowledge, there have been no study done to establish how these personality traits adopts coping strategies during unemployment. Thus, the objective of this study is to understand how the different personality traits respond to online social support and whether the social support provided leads to satisfaction and continuous use of Facebook among the unemployed. Specifically, this study (a) examines the influence of personality traits on online social support in unemployment; (b) evaluates the role of online social support on satisfaction with Facebook, and (c) evaluates the role of satisfaction on continuous use of Facebook during the time of unemployment. Theoretically, our study is important because it contributes to the social media literature by explicating the psychological role of Facebook during unemployment. Additionally, our study extends the online social support in relation to unemployment and social media use. The rest of paper is structured as follows: next section addresses the literature review. This is followed by the methodology, analysis and results. The discussion section is presented, before providing the implications as the study concludes with the limitations and avenues for future research.

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