Chapter 12

Building New Relationships: Social Media Trustworthiness in Gulf Cooperation Countries

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ABSTRACT

Given the current widespread popularity of social media, such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and many other applications, understanding users’ attitudes and usage behavior of social media applications becomes a necessity in order to develop future placements of such technologies and increase the level of trust among the users. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to shed light on the impact of trustworthiness of social media on the intention to use it. Data is gathered through a quantitative method, in which a questionnaire is used as a primary data. A convenient sampling is applied, in which the most easily accessible managers and employees in Ministry of Interior in Bahrain are chosen. The results demonstrate that there is a significant positive relationship between trustworthiness and intention to use social media. The study recommends future works to study the impact of security awareness on the usage of social media in public sector in Bahrain.

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Building New Relationships

INTRODUCTION

The current trend of technology in the digital age extends the reach of communication media to all domains of social life in a network that is both global and local, generic and customized, and in a dynamic pattern. It is been argued that the Middle Eastern, in general, and the Countries Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC), in particular, have heavy investments in their ICT infrastructure in order to develop Internet access through broadband along with 3G, 4G and 5G network services (Alqudsi-ghabra et al., 2011). In fact, the GCC economies in general has been leading the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region’s economic growth during 2018 and 2019 through large-scale infrastructure investment such as the Expo 2020 in the UAE (Selman & Faiq, 2018). They stated that the technology in the GCC has evolved from a highly fragmented market to an ecosystem of a wide variety of product and services.

The adoption of advanced technologies have been rapidly accelerated. In this regard, Chami (2019) recently declared that FinTech and blockchain have affected nearly all the industries located in the GCC and at different paces. In general, FinTech is playing a vital role in the future of financial services in both public and private sectors in the GCC and the UAE itself is embracing the potential of blockchain technology across industries through targeting to have all government documents on the blockchain by 2020 (Chami, 2019).

The telecommunication sector is a significant engine for economic growth, diversification and social cohesion in Bahrain. It is used to provide leading-edge services and respond to both consumers’ and businesses’ needs. It is crucial for improving productivity and enhancing the growth of new sectors such as energetic digital services sector. Therefore, a strong telecommunications platform as a part of a dynamic Information and Communications Technology (ICT) ecosystem will enable the government and citizens to achieve a range of enhancement in health care, education and communication with governmental bodies (TRA Annual Report, 2017).

Web 2.0 technology is found to provide an easy access to information, improve communication, ensure convenience in health, education, and other sectors, and it enhance both the efficiency and the productivity. However, internet users still hesitate to fully trust these social networks. Given the nature of social media platforms and the large number of users disseminating information, inaccurate or false information is considered as an inherent problem (Lindsay, 2011). It has been found that such mistaken and untruthful information has been spread through social media during disasters such as the Arab spring.

Previous literatures have identified social media as a significant vehicle in promoting social networking and connections in all fields. However, still there is a lack of addressing the impact of such connections in order to create trust in these fields. Therefore, this research aims to study the impact of trustworthiness of social
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