UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

MEDIATING EFFECT OF UNCERTAINTY ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION TRAITS AND LIFE HAPPINESS AMONGST FACEBOOK USERS

SRI AZRA ATTAN

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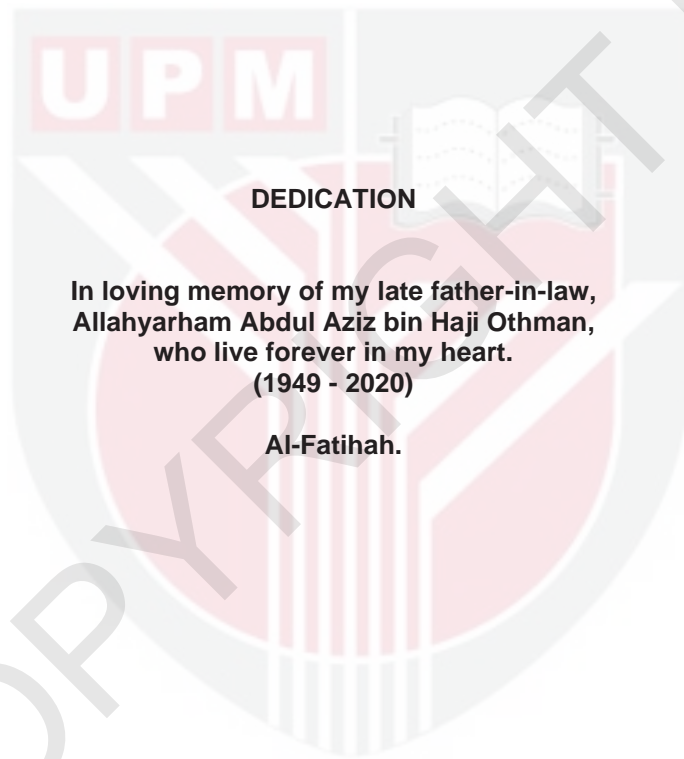
By

SRI AZRA ATTAN

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2019

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my late father-in-law,
Allahyarham Abdul Aziz bin Haji Othman,
who live forever in my heart.
(1949 - 2020)

Al-Fatihah.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia
in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**MEDIATING EFFECT OF UNCERTAINTY ON RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION TRAITS AND
LIFE HAPPINESS AMONGST FACEBOOK USERS**

By

SRI AZRA ATTAN

December 2019

Chair   : Jusang Bolong, PhD
Faculty   : Modern Languages and Communication

The most influential factor that affects the potential of individual fulfilment is
interpersonal attraction; a perception of being attractive and feeling attracted
towards another. Although social media, e.g. Facebook, offers an alternative for
Face-to-Face (FtF) interaction by reading news and updates, Mediated-
Communication users tend to post more negative items, which undesirably
affected their happiness in life. This makes interpersonal attraction in cyberspace
is more challenging compared to FtF environment. Since interpersonal attraction
is developed during the initial interaction, there is a large amount of uncertainty
that needs to be assured to experience happiness in life. The limitation of
previous studies is when the scholars were only focusing on the direct effect of
interpersonal attraction on life happiness. Thus, there should be a mediating
variable to strengthen the relationship between interpersonal attraction and life
happiness. Hence, this study examined the mediating effect of uncertainty on
relationship between interpersonal attraction traits, namely physical attraction,
social attraction, extraversion and popularity towards life happiness amongst
Facebook users. A quantitative survey was conducted by distributing a set of a
questionnaire via a survey-development website to 402 Facebook users who
were selected through snowball sampling technique. It was found that as more
physical attraction, social attraction and extraversion are shown by other
Facebook users; the lower the uncertainty, the higher the life happiness.
However, as more popularity is shown by other Facebook users; the lower the
uncertainty, however, it is not enhancing the life happiness. The role of mediated-
communication is a new perspective of the predicament in the communication
field since this study contributed to a worthier understanding of online human
behaviour.

i

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KESAN PERANTARAAN KETIDAKPASTIAN DALAM PERKAITAN DI ANTARA CIRI-CIRI DAYA TARIKAN ANTARA PERSEORANGAN DAN KEBAHAGIAAN HIDUP DI KALANGAN PENGGUNA FACEBOOK

Oleh

SRI AZRA ATTAN

Disember 2019

Pengerusi : Jusang Bolong, PhD
Fakulti : Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Faktor yang paling berpengaruh dalam memberi kesan terhadap potensi kesempurnaan individu ialah daya tarikan antara perseorangan, iaitu persepsi menjadi menarik dan merasa tertarik kepada individu yang lain. Walaupun media sosial seperti Facebook menawarkan alternatif interaksi secara bersemuka dengan membaca berita dan kemas kini, pengguna komunikasi berperantara lebih cenderung untuk memaparkan lebih banyak perkara negatif yang menjejaskan kebahagiaan mereka dalam kehidupan. Ini menjadikan daya tarikan antara perseorangan di ruang siber lebih mencabar berbanding persekitaran secara bersemuka. Oleh kerana daya tarikan antara perseorangan dibina ketika interaksi awal, terdapat banyak ketidakpastian yang perlu dipastikan untuk menempuh kebahagiaan dalam kehidupan. Keterbatasan kajian terdahulu adalah apabila penyelidik hanya memberi tumpuan kepada kesan langsung di antara daya tarikan interpersonal terhadap kebahagiaan hidup. Justeru, perlu ada pemboleh ubah perantara bagi memperkuatkan perkaitan di antara daya tarikan antara perseorangan dengan kebahagiaan hidup. Sehubungan itu, kajian ini mentaksir kesan perantaraan ketidakpastian dalam perkaitan di antara ciri-ciri daya tarikan antara perseorangan iaitu tarikan fizikal, tarikan sosial, ekstraversi dan populariti terhadap kebahagiaan hidup di kalangan pengguna Facebook. Kajian tinjauan kuantitatif dilakukan dengan mengedarkan satu set soal selidik melalui laman web pembangunan tinjauan kepada 402 pengguna Facebook yang dipilih melalui teknik persampelan bola salji. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa lebih banyak daya tarikan fizikal, daya tarikan sosial dan ektraversi dipaparkan oleh pengguna Facebook lain; semakin rendah ketidakpastian, semakin tinggi kebahagiaan hidup. Bagaimanapun, semakin banyak populariti dipaparkan oleh pengguna Facebook lain; semakin rendah ketidakpastian, namun ia tidak meningkatkan kebahagiaan hidup. Peranan komunikasi berperantara adalah perspektif baru dalam permasalahan bidang komunikasi memandangkan kajian ini menyumbang kepada pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang tingkah laku manusia dalam talian.

ii

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I love you all to infinity and beyond.

SRI AZRA ATTAN

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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v

Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FtF	Face-to-Face
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
NCT	New Communication Technology
SNS	Social Networking Sites
MC	Mediated-Communication
OTH	Orientations to Happiness
MRT	Media Richness Theory
IAT	Interaction Appearance Theory
SWB	Subjective Well-Being
IM	Instant Messaging
SD	Standard Deviation
IAS	Interpersonal Attraction Scale
EPQR	Eysenck Personality Questionnaire
FPS	Facebook Popularity Scale
PS	Popularity Scale
CLUES	Clatterbuck Uncertainty Evaluation Scale
OHS	Orientation to Happiness Scale
EPQ	Eysenck Personality Questionnaire
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
PLS	Partial Least Squares
CR	composite reliability
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
CMV	Common Method Variance
IPMA	Importance-Performance Analysis

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 introduced the research background, research problem, research question, research objective, research significance, and research limitation of this study.

1.1   Research Background

As society evolves, it comes gradually to support growth and potential of individual fulfilment, which varies from all perspectives that include a psychological, cultural, or spiritual angle. The most influential factor that affects those fulfillments is the feeling of happiness when having a relationship with others (Kim & Lee, 2011). The deep concern in life is being in a relationship; regardless of friends, relatives, or lovers (Baumeister et al., 2013). Without a relationship, people would feel alone, depressed, and unhappy, as there is no purpose of living a life (Attan, 2011). This view brightens the importance of communication in understanding the emotions around them. An individual owns a variety of relationships that range from the surface to superficial. These versatile, durable, and shallow ranged of relationship derives from an extensive facet; e.g. a couple who shares the same ideas and interests; such as political views, leisure pursuit, and similar gratification (Graves & Kwan, 2012). Engagement in the pleasure of bonding ties in life usually transpires with the interpersonal relationship; developed from initial acquaintance to close friendship, which involves colleagues, online friends, Face-to-Face (FtF) acquaintances or long-distance relationships (Metts & Cupach, 2007).

Interpersonal relationship is the personal sentimental bond between people; e.g. friendship, affection, or respect (Galla, 2004), which implies the interdependence between another and tends to share their judgments and beliefs (Kelley, 2013). This kind of relationship is centred on emotional support, which includes mutual interest; e.g. enjoying the same food and interested to the similar topic of discussion (Attan, 2011) by having social interaction amongst them.

Due to the knowledge expansion of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), the evolution of social interaction is transforming from FtF to CMC interaction (Kock, 2005; Kubey et al., 2001). The presence of New Communication Technology (NCT) changes how people relate to one another (Ean, 2010) and CMC is yet to reinstate the conventional medium of communication as an active communication channel (Meijden & Veenman, 2005). Such activity on Social Networking Sites (SNS) are replacing FtF social interactions and reaching people who undergone an individual social capital (Arampatzi et al., 2018) through various platforms of social media; e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter.

The sophistication of technology advancement in NCT is evolving where people do not depend on CMC to socialize in SNS but directing to other media of communication namely Mediated-Communication (MC); by using updated smart devices; e.g. smartphones, tablets or iPads, to mingle in social media. For instance, out of 2 billion monthly active users as of September 2017, over 1 billion of those are mobile-only users (Brandwatch, 2018). These smart devices act as surplus computers that people can use anywhere without limitation (Terpstra & Limpaphayom, 2012) and now are replacing pen and paper, most likely to stay towards a paperless society (Rodrigues, 2011). MC is more practical and flexible in so many ways; e.g. the smaller size that makes it convenient for people to use it in any location and the Internet connectivity that is always on (Cameron & Webster, 2005). Besides, social tools on these devices provide users with easy access to social media; like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Because of its useful mechanisms for keeping in touch with one's circle of contacts (Hogben & Dekker, 2010), social media has become ubiquitous and essential for social networking and content sharing. Past researches had suggested that MC could be a positive experience (Nitzburg & Farber, 2013; Sherblom et al., 2013); especially towards happiness in life. Thus, social media is an information source for its users, which is convenient to interconnect with millions of others around the world by providing unparalleled access to information (Wajcman, 2008).

In social psychology, the interpersonal attraction is the intention of a person to have admiration and warm approval towards someone else (Unal & Kobak, 2011), which related to a person admires, adores, or hates another person that they knew in their life (Berscheid & Walster, 1969). Without interpersonal attraction, there would be no love for a family member, romantic partner, or friend. Thus, without this energizing effect of emotions, life would be a colourless painting (Bailey, 2007), as interpersonal attraction is essential to feel happiness in living life. The reason is that interpersonal attraction related to the desire that moves two or more persons to be together by developing a lifelong relationship, in which primarily relate to the occurrence of thought, regarding what they keen and fond of, until they started to be loving to each other.

One could not get the feeling of happiness in life with the uncertainty of their companion. The manifestation of uncertainty is diverse; for instance, the information may be incomplete, unreliable, vague, or contradictory (Klir, 2005). In most cases, individuals who deal with the uncertainty of each other would find themselves always suspicious, restless, and worry that the relationship would end. When the uncertainty of someone is at ease, their mind is at peace, and even the thought of that person gives the feeling of happiness to their heart (Bravo et al., 2012). Thus, it raises questions about the legitimacy of those statements, so it should be proven in this study.

2

Besides, people who attracted to one another would find the feeling of happiness in their lives (Russell, 2015). What happiness means is diverse, flexible, and adaptable; in certain circumstances, happiness is illustrated as feeling excited; e.g. being enthusiastic or eager; and in other situations, happiness is portrayed as feeling calm; e.g. being relaxed and tranquil (Mogilner et al., 2012).

One's determination or goal based on the type of happiness that one wants to achieve; for example, a person who decided to pick more inspiring verdicts when concentrating on the forthcoming matter and more relaxing decisions when centred on the time-being substance. Eventually, researchers in psychology conveyed that people should enjoy the feeling of greater happiness in their life (Boven & Gilovich, 2003).

1.2   Research Problem

Research has suggested that improving life happiness leads to numerous benefits. As life is more fulfilling by enhancing happiness (Seligman, 2002), life happiness is associated with health improvement (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), decision making development (Michalos, 2017), better work performance (Erez & Isen, 2002), and growth in productivity (Zelenski et al., 2008). A happier society is more supportive society since individuals who are in a higher level of life happiness are more positive and helpful toward others (Fredrickson, 2003).

Conversely, people who are in the situation of depression and extremely low in life happiness have more tendency for committing suicide (Daly & Wilson, 2009). People who suffer from the feeling of unhappiness in life are expected to be involved in deviant behaviours (Markova, 2018), e.g. alcoholism or crime (Verweij, 1999) and engage in work withdrawal behaviours (LeBreton et al., 2004), e.g. workers are gossiping instead of working (Sharkawi, Rahim, & Dahalan, 2013).

However, all those life happiness magnitudes stated happened in FtF interaction. It was found that enhancing life happiness by utilizing the Internet is capable of overcoming the feeling of loneliness (Amichai & Artzi, 2003; Shaw & Gant, 2002). Given that social support is fundamental for happiness (Kim & Lee, 2011), online social connection is competent for boosting self-esteem (Huang et al., 2015), which enhancing the level of happiness in life.

Prior researches on MC use encountered that the lack of life happiness caused adverse psychological outcomes which happen on the cyberspace; e.g. narcissism (Park, 2014), cyberbullying (Schacter et al., 2016; Farrell, 2013), neuroticism (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012), low self-esteem (Forest & Wood, 2012), loneliness (Sowislo & Orth, 2013), and antisocial behaviour (Quercia, 2013); e.g. delinquency (Donnellan et al., 2005), aggression (Hill, 2014; Abell & Brewer, 2014), and depression (Park, 2014). There were also linkages between

3

MC and the need of life happiness, which directed to negative feelings; e.g. substance addiction (Thomas et al., 2016; Muise et al., 2009), boredom and irritation (Barak, 2008), attention-deficit; e.g. poor concentration, hyperactivity, and learning disabilities **(**Williams et al., 2011).

Essentially, the research of the negative impacts of social media; for instance, Internet addiction (Rooij et al., 2017), anxiety (Vannucci et al., 2017), jealousy (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2016), and its implication on human communications is part of the sphere for researchers to be addressed (Clayton et al., 2013; Das & Sahoo, 2011). Generally, excessive Facebook usage creates conflict, which associates with adverse relationship outcomes that make it possible for considering broader research on the relational consequences of more significant time spent on Facebook use (Kerkhof et al., 2011). Although the use of social media can complicate the aspects of a relationship for some, it can also ease a relationship for others (Hertlein & Webster, 2008). Thus, there is also research indicated that social media, like Facebook, could enhance happiness in people's life by communicating positive content rather than harmful matters (Bazarova et al., 2015). Given that Facebook is known to inspire happiness (Kim & Lee, 2011), life happiness could be managed by reading news and updates through Facebook (Suwanphrom, 2016).

Seeing that interpersonal relationship is a vital source of life happiness (Uchida et al., 2008), it can be achieved apparently through initial relationship (Sprecher et al., 2013; Shamir, 2011). In this case, the initial relationship is governed by interpersonal attraction (Mortensen, 2012), mainly through social media, as it has become a life routine for many people (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). However, few researchers have discussed the interpersonal attraction traits through MC. When scholars investigated the relationships in new media transformation, they only focused on how social media is affecting relationships, and the use of social media in relationships (Kashian et al., 2017). Previous research has shown that interpersonal attraction traits were able to improve happiness (Kafashan, 2017; Edwards & Harris, 2016) by focusing on the predictors of life happiness; e.g. physical attraction (Sneade & Furnham, 2016), social attraction (Wotipka & High, 2016; Edwards & Harris, 2016), task attraction (Navarro, 2016; Woo & Jungryum, 2016), sexual attraction (Wolfe & Patterson, 2017; Tracy & Beall, 2011), similarity (Human & Biesanz, 2011), extraversion (Agbo & Ngwu, 2017), and popularity (Wang et al., 2017; Manago & Vaughn, 2015).

Since interpersonal attraction judgments are promptly developed during initial interactions (Horan, 2016; Boucher & Jacobson, 2012), there is a large amount of uncertainty that needs to be assured of experiencing the happiness in life (Zhang & Ji, 2003). Previous studies documented that interpersonal attraction and uncertainty are negatively related (Horan, 2016; Redmond, 2015). Even though people are happier if the level of interpersonal attraction is getting higher (Berrios et al., 2015; Berscheid, 2014), however the feeling of happiness itself is still depends on the uncertainty about the opposite person whether it is definite or vice versa (Flesher, 2015; Groves, 2011). Thus, uncertainty is a significant

4

issue that occurs between them, considering that it is the essence of happiness in life (Ahmed, 2010; Zhang & Ji, 2005).

In brief, there are earlier studies about the relationship between interpersonal attraction and life happiness. However, the limitation is that the scholars were only focusing on the direct effect of interpersonal attraction to life happiness. Whereas from the theoretical perspective, they are supposed to consider a mediating role in determining the strengths and weaknesses of associations between interpersonal attraction, and life happiness. Thus, there is an inadequacy of knowledge in their studies, where it should be a mediating variable to strengthen the relationship between interpersonal attraction and life happiness.

Uncertainty has not been investigated comprehensively in an MC situation (Antheunis et al., 2010), as it is always associated with FtF interactions (Sheldon, 2009). This issue makes interpersonal attraction in cyberspace is more challenging compared to FtF environment, since MC's characteristics provide advanced alteration for self-disclosure (Heisler & Crabill, 2006). Hence, it takes a longer time to treasure enough information for users to be attracted to each other to develop online relationships because of adjournment and interruption. For instance, the delayed character caused by the duration of typing, waiting for responses, and replying messages that provide users with the opportunity to revise, improve or revoke their messages, and statements before the transmission of information (Scheibe & Gupta, 2017).

Although social media expands the human social reach (Horrigan et al., 2006) by enabling long-distance communications, and time constraint is not the matter, there is still a deficiency in physical, and social cues through MC. For instance, direct video and audio occurrence like in FtF interaction (Christopherson, 2007), and MC users were not able to develop a relationship with others as fast as in FtF due to the barrier of communication.

Peterson et al. (2005) proposed an Orientations to Happiness (OTH) to meet the destination of happiness, through pleasure, engagement, and meaning; towards the path between full, and empty life. Likewise, people are happier if they are sure about the information of a person that they needed to know (Garrison & Lee, 2017). Within the context of this study, uncertainty would be tested whether it mediates the relationship between interpersonal attraction traits to enhance happiness in life or vice versa. However, the OTH does not confer the element of uncertainty in determining three different orientations, namely pleasure, engagement, and meaning of life.

Thereupon, Media Richness Theory (MRT) is referring to the situations, which demanding the information exchange for uncertainty reduction. It regards the media that can transmit needed information, for uncertainty reduction, and ambiguity resolution to achieve the goal of communication (Spiegelhalter, 2017).

5

Within the context of this study, information may transmit via photo and video-sharing in social media; such as Facebook or Instagram.

Graham et al. (2017) stated that a person who hungers for happiness should undergo several factors in reducing uncertainty to enhance their happiness in life. Thus, several tasks require communication skills for uncertainty reduction as a solution for the problems arise, such as the authenticity of information delivered. Thus, the MRT based on whether there is uncertainty in a state; thus, different media communication methods should be applied, according to their levels of richness. However, the approach of communication to handle the situation is depending on the richness level of media involved. Although the MRT attached the explanation for uncertainty reduction, it did not touch on which view that may be interrelated with interpersonal attraction.

The concept of interpersonal attraction traits relates to Interaction Appearance Theory (IAT), which presented that the perceptions of interpersonal attraction are varying before and after the interaction; this depends on whether the interactions are positive or negative ones. The IAT proposed that effective communication leads to increased perceptions of attractiveness and pursuing a new relationship, even when initial levels of attractiveness were low (Pena & Brody, 2014).

The IAT as well suggested that the pictures of interpersonal attraction are changing from positive to negative perceptions if irritative interaction between communicator is kept on going (Dix, 2013). Although the first impression and perception are created upon the first engagement, the interpersonal attraction is still depending on the quality of interaction between communicator; whether they have a valuable communication with excellent communication skills, and proper attitude or vice versa.

Maintaining social relationships has been defined as a core element of ageing well. With a considerable amount of older adults living alone, social media provides the possibility to engage in meaningful social contact, e.g. by joining online social networks, e.g. Facebook (Leist, 2013). Geographical distance to kin, impaired mobility or time-consuming obligations such as caregiving may hinder older adults from satisfying the need for social contact, with the risk that these adults feel lonely, but have little opportunity to engage in social contact. Social media especially Facebook can provide older adults with empowerment, a construct that refers to a global sense of connectedness and increased control and self-efficacy (Barak et al., 2008) which involved in the effects of interpersonal relationships and social processes. Thus, it seems promising to engage users in online support groups.

The society nowadays has been breached by the emergence of Internet-based social media; which turned out to be a substitute medium to foster relationships amongst others regardless of the age factor. Thus, could MC be the platform for

enhancing happiness in life? Is it possible that the interpersonal attraction occurs directly through MC? These questions are raised due to growing concern that FtF interaction is more gratifying socially and emotionally rather than MC condition (Lundy & Drouin, 2016).

Although MC offers an alternative for people who are in the situation of isolation, and loneliness to improve their life happiness, they still have the intention to publish unconstructive and destructive contents on the Internet, compared to those who are with companions, which negatively affected their level of happiness in life (Jin, 2013). Thus, could MC substitute the significance of FtF social networks in reaching the goal of enhancing life happiness?

1.3   Research Question

Based on several issues and premises raised in the research problem, this study obtained two general research questions that illustrate the main issues, which involved in problem-solving and represented the topic of the study, as follows:

1. What is the relationship between interpersonal attraction traits, uncertainty and life happiness amongst Facebook users?

2. What is the mediating effect of uncertainty on the relationship between interpersonal attraction traits and life happiness amongst Facebook users?

1.4   Research Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the mediating effect of uncertainty on the relationship between interpersonal attraction traits and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

Furthermore, the specific objectives of this study were:

1. To examine the relationship between physical attraction and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

2. To examine the relationship between social attraction and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

3. To examine the relationship between extraversion and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

4. To examine the relationship between popularity and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

7

5. To examine the relationship between uncertainty and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

6. To examine the mediating effect of uncertainty on the relationship between physical attraction and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

7. To examine the mediating effect of uncertainty on the relationship between social attraction and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

8. To examine the mediating effect of uncertainty on the relationship between extraversion and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

9. To examine the mediating effect of uncertainty on the relationship between popularity and life happiness amongst Facebook users.

1.5   Research Significance

From the theoretical view, the IAT, OTH, and MRT have existed in FtF interaction for many years in the communication research area. It is imperative to determine the IAT, OTH, and MRT in a new paradigm with a distinct perspective. This study contributed to assessing the applicability of the IAT, OTH, and MRT through MC, also to answer the question of whether this combination can be fitted in the age of NCT or not. The findings of this study explain the relevancy of those theories in the MC area.

In the methodological aspect, a quantitative survey method was implemented conventionally by distributing the questionnaires through FtF situation. However, to challenge the significance and suitability of online questionnaires distribution, this study was using a survey website to get a view from an online relationship development context. Besides providing access to individuals in remote locations, online survey research is more accessible and faster, because of the ability to reach respondents without border, and the effortlessness of automatic collection of data, which lessens the researcher's time and effort (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2010). This situation has escalated the advancement of technology in MC research, from the point of the consistency of online questionnaires distribution as the instrument of the study, especially in Malaysia.

Pragmatically, the interpersonal attraction is responsible for happiness enhancement to fulfil the inadequacy in interpersonal communication. Thus, this study contributed to seize the knowledge of interpersonal communication in order to develop or to maintain the relationship, regardless of FtF or MC. Although most of the relationship studies were focusing on FtF communication instead of interaction through MC, the role of MC is a new perspective of the predicament in the communication field since this study contributed to a useful understanding of human behaviour in managing relationships through online, which is newly apprehended in Malaysia. Altogether, this study is significant in the discipline of human communication. Besides contributing to the existing

8

knowledge, this study would as well serve as a basis for further research in the future.

In the end, the significance of this study was divided into three major of research implications; namely theoretical implication, which is also classified into three arrangements, based on theoretical integration, theoretical intention, and theoretical extension; as well methodological implication, and practical implication as explained further in Chapter 5.

1.6 Research Scope

There were several scopes in this study. The first scope was its generalizability, due to the used of sample size that is not representing a broad cross-section of the entire population on the Internet since the study was restricted to Facebook users only. Furthermore, it did not apply to the other medium of social media; for example, Twitter, Keek, or Instagram. Thus, the snowballing procedure in this study contributed to a viewpoint from Facebook users only.

Verbal and non-verbal cues were limited on Facebook due to the barrier of communication in MC condition (Kalayci, Ekenel & Gunes, 2014). Thus, the context of physical attraction in this study was limited to photos and videos only, since the most important factor for physical attraction is visual cues; e.g. through the profile photos that were displayed (Wang et al. 2010; Walther et al., 2008), or through the videos that were published by the user (Rhodes et al., 2011).

Since this study was examining the suitability of MC condition in the local context, the limitation was the population sample, which is not involving other citizenship that was out of Malaysia. Although there is a question about international friends for descriptive analysis in the instrument, the scope of this study was limited to a local friend that they attracted to, in the first year of their involvement on Facebook. Therefore, this study was only focusing on Malaysian Facebook users who were developing their relationship on the Internet. As the term of happiness is enormous, it does not a concern to other nature of happiness in subjective well-being (SWB) such as self-happiness or relationship happiness. The term happiness in this study is solely referring to life happiness which means overall meaningfulness of life with appropriate time management, and balancing daily activities in terms of work, health, family, and social contacts (Gropel, 2005).

9

1.7   Research Limitation

The limitation in carrying out this study was also the distribution of questionnaires, which was distributed through the website survey only. Since this study was focusing on online communication, there was no questionnaires distribution in FtF condition at all. However, there was an implication regarding the limitation of this study. The issue was occurred particularly in terms of the respondents' failure to respond to the questionnaires and answered it through website survey due to some misunderstandings, extreme reactions, and obstructions reaching consensus regarding the distribution of online questionnaires (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991).

Richardson (2005) indicated that 60% is a satisfactory response rate in social research surveys. According to Cook et al. (2000), there are several approaches for raising the response rates of an online survey; e.g. providing frequent reminders with at least three reminders, and facilitating respondents to access the survey by providing URL that linked directly to the survey with just only one click. Besides, extending the time length for survey's submission and ensuring the respondents' confidentiality of their responses are also another way for raising the response rates of an online survey (Dommeyer et al., 2004). Overall, the more approaches carried for raising the response rates of the online survey, the better the response rates obtained (Watt et al., 2002). Consequently, this study could affect to a various implication due to the limitation, which distinguishes between developing the relationship in MC compared to FtF condition.

1.8   Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the research background, which includes the interpersonal relationship in both FtF and MC condition. This chapter also has discussed the issues and problems, which aroused from the effect of globalization that blast the community today. In brief, research questions, research objectives, research significance, and research limitation were explained extensively in this chapter.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Born and raised in Johor, Sri Azra Attan attended Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur and enrolled Diploma in Linguistics in 1998. Soon after, she was attached with Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Berhad (TV3) as part of the Sports Production Team in producing sports programmes such as F1, MotoGP, Japan GT, World Cup, Sea Games, Piala Malaysia etc.

In the year 2004, she moved to Media Prima Sdn. Bhd. (TV3) to be involved in the Entertainment Production Team for producing entertainment shows such as Anugerah Juara Lagu, Anugerah Skrin, Mentor, Muzik-Muzik, Explorace, etc. At the same time, she obtained her Bachelor Degree in Communication at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Serdang, Selangor in 2006.

After a decade, she left TV3 in 2008 to pursue her Master of Science (Communication) and Doctor of Philosophy (Communication) at UPM. Before graduating, she was a Graduate Research Fellow (GRF) at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication in UPM where she developed a passion to a statistical tool, which captured her research interest in New Media Communication. She has presented research papers in numerous national and international conferences, seminars etc.

Sri Azra is now the founder of Millennium Informative Academy (MIA), a training company delivering high-quality training to individuals and businesses across the country. In her off time, she enjoys reading, traveling and spending time with her family.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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