

EXPECTANCY THEORY PREDICTIONS OF BLOGGING INTENTION AND CONDUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Blogging is sometimes viewed as a new, grassroots form of journalism and a way to shape democracy outside the mass media. In this study, we present a model that addresses the relationships among bloggers' motivations and their conduct, and report the empirical validation of the model. Expectancy theory is applied to construct a conceptual framework and identify key factors that motivate bloggers to create and maintain his or her own Weblog. A questionnaire was distributed to 177 bloggers. Our research findings suggest that bloggers with higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will have a higher degree of blogging intention. Intrinsic motivations are a more important indicator than the extrinsic motivations in predicting their blogging intention. There is no significant difference in their intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and blogging intention between bloggers of different gender, age, and time spent on the Internet.

Keywords: Expectancy Theory, Blog, Bloggers, Intention, Motivation

INTRODUCTION

Blogging is one of the most recently developed techniques for an ordinary person to promote a message to the world [11]. Easy to use from any Internet connection point, blogging has become firmly established as a web based communications tool [25]. People who are open to new experiences and those who are highly sensitive are likely to be bloggers [10]. Technorati (<http://www.technorati.com>) indicated that there were over 113 million blogs growing at the rate of 175,000 per day with 18 postings per second. In addition, 89% of the companies surveyed said that they think blogs will become more important in the next five years [2]. Because of their popularity, blogs are now recognized as a new news media. However, unlike traditional news media, which are dominated by news agencies and professional reporters, blogs are created by millions of ordinary people [15]. Thus, the

popularity of blogging raises an interesting question: Why do people devote themselves to building and maintaining their blogs?

Various studies have examined bloggers' motivations to blog. For example, Nardi et al. [18] identified five major motivations via in-depth interviews (document one's life; provide commentary and opinions; express deeply felt emotions; articulate ideas through writing; and form and maintain community forums). However, most of the previous studies that examined influential factors for blogging were based on anecdotal evidence and failed to provide empirical evidence regarding bloggers' conduct and their motivations via a theoretical base.

In this study, we apply expectancy theory to 177 bloggers to provide a better understanding of their behavioral intentions and motivation to blog. We then examine the relationship of various motivational factors to actual blogging conducts. Differences between bloggers of different gender, ages, and time spent on the Internet is also explored in order to explain a blogger's intention and conducts to create and maintain his or her weblog.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blogging Intention and Conduct

A Blog is defined as a web page with minimal to no external editing, providing on-line commentary, periodically updated, and presented in reverse chronological order, with hyperlinks to other online sources (www.samizdata.net). 'Blogs' have evolved along similar lines to other forms of human communication in that they are a product of convenience rather than design [25]. In recent years, blogging has become an increasingly popular technological form of social networking. Millions of bloggers (those who create blogs) are driven to document their lives, provide commentary and opinions, express deeply felt emotions, articulate ideas through writing, and form and maintain community forums [18]. However, most of the research has focused on blogs' adoption and usage.

For example, Zhang et al. [27] confirmed that bloggers' intentions to change their blog services are strongly associated with three factors: Satisfaction, sunk costs, and attractive alternatives. Meanwhile, moderating effects are found in gender, but not in sunk costs. Shen and Chiou [21] showed that asset specificity and community pressure play mediating roles in the relationship between community identification and attitude toward using blog services, which in turn affects intention to stay with a blogging community. Perceived usefulness can successfully determine the attitude of using a blogging community. However, relatively few consistent findings have emerged from this stream of research. While a variety of factors have been found to be associated with blogging conduct in one or more studies (e.g., [13, 21, 23]), their significant relationships have not been consistently demonstrated.

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory was applied within the context of an individual's decision to predict behavior [9]. The theory has been proposed to predict the following variables: Job effort, job performance, job satisfaction, managerial motivation, occupational choice, the importance of pay and pay effectiveness, leadership behavior and leader effectiveness [12]. Chiang and Jang [5] applied expectancy theory to employee motivation in a hotel setting and demonstrated its validity. Lee [16] utilized Vroom's expectancy theory to develop public library user motivation. Mitchell and Nebeker [17] applied expectancy theory models to predict the academic effort and performance of male undergraduates. Friedman, Cox, and Maher [8] employed an approach based on expectancy theory and an experimental design in a field setting to investigate the conditions influencing student motivation to rate the contributions of their peers during team projects. Previous studies have demonstrated that expectancy theory can support an appropriate theoretical framework to measure user intention in using an information system [3, 4, 22]. Thus, we believe that the wide use of expectancy theory in examining individuals' intentions in exhibiting various types of work behavior suggest its appropriateness for use in examining the issue in blogging conduct.

Our objective was to investigate the impact of various potential motivational rewards. We compiled these factors from previous literature and a pilot study. The ten motivational rewards we tested in this study included 5 intrinsic and 5 extrinsic. The 5 intrinsic rewards were (A1) Killing time by blogging,

(A2) Having space to store my data and files, (A3) Enjoy sharing my life with others, (A4) Pouring out my feelings on my blog, and (A5) Gaining achievement by blogging. The 5 extrinsic rewards were (B1) Looking forward to others' responses, (B2) Finding good topics when talking with others, (B3) Regularly connecting with people I know, (B4) Meeting new friends, and (B5) Understanding others' feelings and opinions.

Based on the prior studies, we propose that the overall motivation of a blogger is the sum of products of attractiveness of various individual rewards associated with a blog (A_k) and the probability that a blog will produce those rewards (I_k).

$$M = \sum_{k=1}^n (A_k \times I_k)$$

Where M is motivation to blog; A_k is attractiveness (or value) of reward k related to blogging; and I_k is the perceived probability that productive blogging will lead to reward k . In this study, bloggers were asked to assess the attractiveness of the ten possible rewards resulting from blogging. According to expectancy theory, multiplying the attractiveness of each reward by the probability of its occurrence and then adding the resulting products yields total motivation of an individual blogger to blog. Bloggers' intention will be determined according to the total motivational rewards. After that, the bloggers then determine how much effort (conduct) they will make according to their blogging intentions.

The hypotheses addressing blogger behavior are as stated below. The research model and research variables are listed in Figure 1 and Table 1.

- H₁: Motivation for blogging is positively related to blogging intention.
- H_{1a}: Extrinsic motivation for blogging is positively related to blogging intention.
- H_{1b}: Intrinsic motivation for blogging is positively related to blogging intention.
- H₂: Blogging intention is positively related to the blogging conduct.
- H₃: Gender of the blogger is significantly associated with motivation for blogging, blogging intention, and blogging conduct.
- H₄: Age of the blogger is significantly associated with motivation for blogging, blogging intention, and blogging conduct.
- H₅: Internet usage time is significantly associated with motivation for blogging, blogging intention, and blogging conduct.

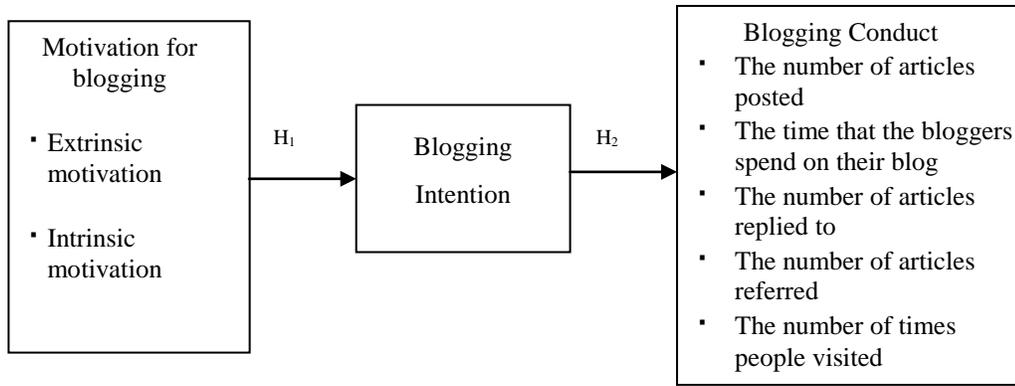


Figure 1. The Research Model

Table 1. Research Variables and Definitions

Research Variables	Definitions
Motivation for Blogging	Overall motivation for blogging is the sum after multiplying the attractiveness of each extrinsic or intrinsic reward by the probability of its occurrence
Blogging Intention	Degree to which the blogger intends to increase use in the future
Blogging Conduct	The number of articles or entries posted on the blog, the time spent maintaining the blog, the number of articles replied to, the number of articles referred, and the number of times people visited

“strongly agree.” Furthermore, blogging conduct was indicated by the number of articles or entries posted by bloggers on their blogs and the time they spent maintaining their blogs.

Sample Characteristics and Study Context

400 bloggers were randomly selected from the 100,000+ bloggers who have maintained his or her blog on the WRETCH website (<http://www.wretch.cc>) for more than one year. The WRETCH website is currently the most well known and established blog platform in Taiwan. Among the 400 questionnaires distributed, 177 were returned and usable, representing a 44.3% response rate. From the bloggers who returned usable questionnaires, 107 were females (60.5%) and 70 were males (39.5%). In the questionnaire, these bloggers evaluated the attractiveness (value) of ten blogging rewards (A_k) and their perceived probability (I_k) that productive blogging would attain each of the ten rewards (Table 2).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Instrument Development

This study relied on expert interviews and a survey instrument. A focus group of five very successful bloggers (all of them blogging for more than three years and their blog has at least, on average, more than 200 visits per day) were interviewed to generate questionnaire items for possible attractive rewards, based on their own experiences. Attractiveness was evaluated using a scale of 1–10, with 10 representing “strongly agree” and 1 representing “strongly disagree.” The probability that productive blogging will lead to those rewards was also examined using a scale of 1–10, with 10 representing, “to a great extent” and 1 for “not at all.” The intention to blog was assessed using three items constructed following recommendations by Davis et al. [6]. One additional item (I intend to recommend my blog to others) was added according to the unique networking feature of blogging. Respondents scored responses on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The research model was measured using the partial least squares (PLS) structural modeling approach. The PLS approach is appropriate for predicting highly complex models [1] and maximizing variances explained by the model constructs [20]. Therefore, the research models were selected and tested via the PLS approach.

Measurement Model

The measurement model was tested for estimated construct reliabilities, convergent validities, and discriminant validity of instruments [14, 20, 26]. Table 3 presents the number of items, means, standard deviations, and reliabilities of constructs. All reliability measures were >0.7. The α -level of the sample indicates a reasonable level of reliability

($\alpha > 0.70$) [19], demonstrating adequate internal consistency. Convergent validity of the instrument is

appropriate when constructs have an AVE of, at minimum, 0.5 [7].

Table 2. Importance and probability of Blogging Rewards to Blogger

Blogging Rewards	Importance of Blogging Rewards		Probability of Blogging Productivity	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Intrinsic				
Killing time by blogging	8.0508	1.8958	7.0113	1.8555
Having space to store my data and file	8.3333	1.8361	7.3842	1.9245
Enjoying sharing my life with others	7.2655	1.8130	7.7062	1.7365
Pouring out my feelings on my blog	8.3955	1.6102	8.1864	1.6391
Gaining achievement by blogging	7.8079	1.9269	6.7966	1.8505
Extrinsic				
Looking forward to others' responses	7.6328	1.8816	6.3164	2.0866
Finding good topics when talking with others	7.9605	1.7560	6.5254	1.9888
Connecting regularly with people I know	8.5254	1.5524	7.6497	1.7259
Meeting new friends	7.3729	1.8485	6.0113	2.1186
Understanding others' feelings and opinions	7.2486	2.0269	6.3390	2.1633

Table 3. Construct Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and AVE

Construct	Item	Mean	St. dev	Loading	Cronbach α	AVE
Intrinsic motivation (MO_I)	moi1	58.050	23.464	0.801	0.862	0.648
	moi2	63.282	24.591	0.703		
	moi3	58.045	23.732	0.851		
	moi4	70.655	23.635	0.817		
	moi5	54.943	23.091	0.843		
Extrinsic motivation (MO_E)	moe6	49.937	24.160	0.866	0.870	0.662
	moe7	53.389	23.115	0.894		
	moe8	66.254	21.821	0.734		
	moe9	46.231	23.303	0.840		
Blogging Intention (INT)	moe10	47.734	24.218	0.716	0.854	0.657
	int1	5.824	1.152	0.870		
	int2	5.096	1.209	0.898		
	int3	4.864	1.302	0.835		
Blogging conduct	int4	5.242	1.345	0.674	0.707	0.679
	post	2.497	0.977	0.918		
	time	2.254	0.781	0.545		
	reply	2.435	1.080	0.745		
	refer	1.197	0.477	0.174		
	view	1.299	0.750	0.320		

The square root of AVE should exceed the intercorrelations for satisfactory discriminant validity [26]. The AVE for each construct was larger than the correlation between a construct and other model constructs. Table 4 presents the factor loadings and

cross-loadings of items measured in this investigation. All item loadings for each construct were larger than cross-loadings of that construct with all other constructs. Hence, convergent validity and discriminant validity were adequate.

Table 4. Factor loadings and cross-loadings

Construct	Scale Items	MO_I	MO_E	INT	Conduct
Intrinsic motivation (MO_I)	moi1	0.8059	0.5362	0.5274	0.2663
	moi2	0.7071	0.4725	0.3905	0.2082
	moi3	0.8567	0.6894	0.5293	0.2953
	moi4	0.8226	0.5333	0.4161	0.2749
	moi5	0.8480	0.7109	0.5071	0.1532
Extrinsic motivation (MO_E)	moe6	0.6679	0.8710	0.4685	0.2346
	moe7	0.6667	0.8993	0.4636	0.1937
	moe8	0.5746	0.7390	0.3934	0.1164
	moe9	0.5652	0.8451	0.3938	0.1176
	moe10	0.5083	0.7208	0.3480	0.0845
Blogging Intention (INT)	int1	0.5152	0.3882	0.8788	0.3255
	int2	0.5410	0.5119	0.9023	0.2611
	int3	0.4987	0.4713	0.8362	0.2473
	int4	0.3955	0.3564	0.6738	0.2199
Blogging conduct	post	0.2810	0.1287	0.3050	0.9281
	time	0.2175	0.1780	0.1810	0.7506
	reply	0.2206	0.2348	0.2487	0.7568

Intrinsic motivation of blogger is positively related to extrinsic motivation, blogging intention, the number of articles blogger posted, the time bloggers spent on maintaining the blog, and the number of articles bloggers replied to. Extrinsic motivation of blogger is positively related to blogging intention, the time bloggers spent on maintaining the blog, and the number of articles bloggers replied to. The sum of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are positively

related to blogging intention, the number of articles the blogger posted, the time bloggers spent on maintaining the blog, and the number of articles bloggers replied to. Blogging intention is positively related to the number of articles the blogger posted, the time bloggers spent on maintaining the blog, the number of articles bloggers replied to, and the number of times people viewed the blog (Table 5).

Table 5. Pearson correlations analysis

	MO_I	MO_E	MO_T	INT	POST	TIME	REPLY	REFER	VIEW
MO_I	1.000								
MO_E	.723***	1.000							
MO_T	.941***	.913***	1.000						
INT	.569***	.509***	.583***	1.000					
POST	.280***	.124	.225***	.300***	1.000				
TIME	.218***	.173**	.213***	.175**	.562***	1.000			
REPLY	.220***	.228***	.240***	.211***	.445***	.413***	1.000		
REFER	.098	.086	.100	.065	.202***	.123	.218***	1.000	
VIEW	.099	.060	.087	.140*	.253***	.228***	.119	-.008	1.000

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1
 MO_T: Total Motivation (=MO_I + MO_E)

The results of structural model testing (Figure 2) include path coefficients and R₂ values. The path coefficients are the relationships between the dependent and independent constructs. The R₂ values represent the degree to which variance is explained

by independent constructs. The test of structural model indicated that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards together substantially explains variance in blogging intention (R₂=36.3%). Blogging intention is also positively related to blogging conduct (R₂=10.8%).

Intrinsic rewards significantly influences blogging intention ($\beta=0.474$, $p<0.01$). Extrinsic rewards also significantly influences blogging intention, but the influences are relatively lower compared to the intrinsic rewards ($\beta=0.162$, $p<0.1$). Intrinsic motivation is the more important indicator than

extrinsic motivation to predict blogging intention of a blogger. Blogging intention is positively related to blogging conducts ($\beta=0.329$, $p<0.01$). Thus, both H1 and H2 are supported.

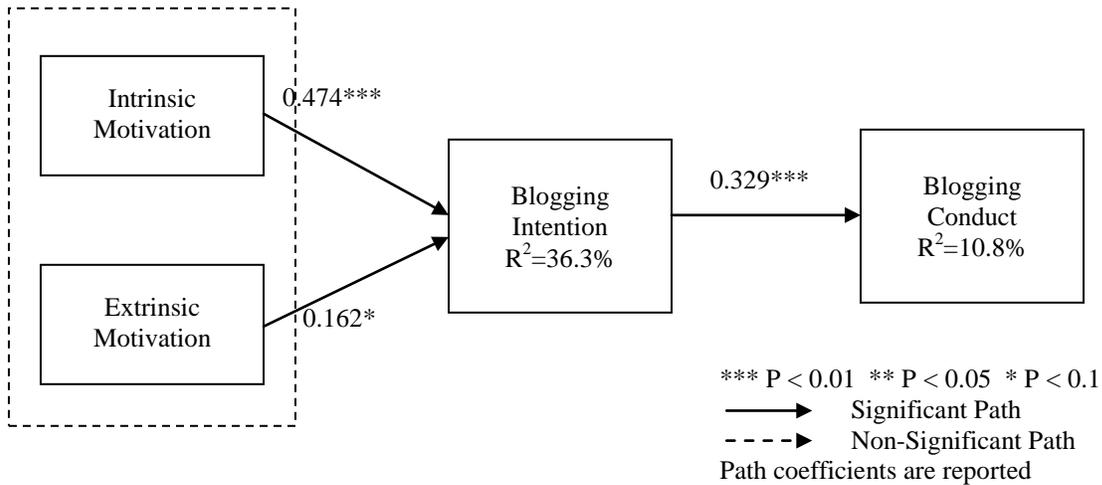


Figure 2. The Result of the Research Model

Table 6. The impact of gender on blogging motivation, intention, and conduct

Construct	Gender	Number	Means	St. dev	F	P value
MO_I	Male	70	61.946	18.855	0.287	0.593
	Female	107	60.374	19.235		
MO_E	Male	70	54.009	18.428	0.544	0.462
	Female	107	51.860	19.297		
MO_T	Male	70	64.172	18.726	0.456	0.500
	Female	107	62.154	19.888		
INT	Male	70	5.179	1.087	0.649	0.422
	Female	107	5.308	1.022		
POST	Male	70	2.457	1.002	0.193	0.661
	Female	107	2.523	0.965		
TIME	Male	70	2.129	0.779	3.027	0.084*
	Female	107	2.336	0.776		
REPLY	Male	70	2.357	1.077	0.600	0.440
	Female	107	2.486	1.085		
REFER	Male	70	1.200	0.403	0.003	0.960
	Female	107	1.196	0.522		
VIEW	Male	70	1.342	0.883	0.386	0.535
	Female	107	1.271	0.653		

*** P < 0.01 ** P < 0.05 * P < 0.1

Data associated with all constructs were analyzed using a repeated-measures one-way-ANOVA test with the independent variable. The results of the independent sample t-test on all constructs are summarized in Table 6, 7. Bloggers of different genders influence the time bloggers spend

maintaining the blog ($F=3.027$, $p=0.084$). Females spend more time than males in maintaining their blogs. The age of bloggers influences the number of articles bloggers replied to ($F=5.753$, $p=0.001$) and the number of times people visit the blog ($F=3.752$, $p=0.012$). Younger bloggers replied to more articles

and had more people visit their blogs. Amount of time on the Internet is associated with the number of articles bloggers replied to. The more time bloggers

used the Internet, the more articles they replied to (F=3.132, P=0.046).

Table 7. The impact of age on blogging motivation, intention, and conduct

Construct	Age	Number	Means	St. dev	F	P value
MO_I	< 20	88	62.997	16.846	1.587	0.194
	> 20	89	60.760	21.079		
MO_E	< 20	88	53.832	18.441	0.897	0.444
	> 20	89	53.109	19.871		
MO_T	< 20	88	64.715	17.998	1.436	0.234
	> 20	89	63.010	20.774		
INT	< 20	88	5.443	0.967	2.126	0.099
	> 20	89	5.029	1.181		
POST	< 20	88	2.671	1.003	2.045	0.109
	> 20	89	2.357	1.008		
TIME	< 20	88	2.296	0.745	0.760	0.518
	> 20	89	2.271	0.916		
REPLY	< 20	88	2.693	1.188	5.753	0.001***
	> 20	89	2.314	0.941		
REFER	< 20	88	1.193	0.476	0.151	0.929
	> 20	89	1.200	0.499		
VIEW	< 20	88	1.296	0.745	3.752	0.012**
	> 20	89	1.286	0.705		

*** P < 0.01 ** P < 0.05 * P < 0.1

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, expectancy theory [24] was employed to examine the relationships between motivational rewards, blogger intentions, and actual conduct. Bloggers with higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will have a higher degree of blogging intention. Intrinsic motivation (ex: Pouring out my feelings on my blog, having space to store my data and file, killing time by blogging and so on) is the more important indicator than extrinsic motivation (ex: regularly connecting with people I know, finding good topics when talking with others, looking forward to others' responses and so on) to predict blogging intention of blogger. Bloggers of different genders, age, and Internet usage time have no differences in intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and blogging intention. However, there are some differences in the time bloggers spent on maintaining their blogs, the number of articles bloggers replied to, and the times people visit their blogs.

This study can lead to several further studies. First, the dependent construct here represents behavioral intention and conduct rather than actual blogging performance (e.g., number of visitors per day). Further studies can determine whether blogging conduct and blog performance are strongly correlated.

A second concern is that the tested model was empirically assessed in only one context. The generalization of the study results is not known beyond the current sample and blogging context. However, the proposed research model explains and predicts blogger behavior. Thus, the system managers of a blog platform (e.g., the WRETCH website) can determine which rewards have the most meaningful impact on bloggers and how to improve blogger intention and conduct in operating their blogs.

APPENDIX: ITEMS AND SCALES

Intrinsic Blogging Rewards

- A1 Killing time by blogging
- A2 Having space to store my data and file
- A3 Enjoying sharing my life with others
- A4 Pouring out my feelings on my blog
- A5 Gaining achievement by blogging

Extrinsic Blogging Rewards

- B1 Looking forward to others' responses
- B2 Finding good topics when talking with others
- B3 Regularly connecting with people I know
- B4 Meeting new friends
- B5 Understanding others' feelings and opinions

Blogging Intention

- 1. I intend to keep blogging on my blog

2. I intend to spend more time managing my blog
3. I intend to edit my blog more frequently in the future
4. I intend to recommend my blog to others

Blogging Conduct

1. On average, how many entries do you publish monthly on your blog?
 0 1-2 3-4 5-6
 7 or more
2. On average, how much time do you spend blogging monthly?
 1 hour or less 1-5 hours
 6-10 hours or more 11-20 hours
 more than 20 hours
3. On average, how many articles do you reply to on your blog monthly?
 0 1-5 6-10 11-15
 16 or more
4. On average, how many times are your articles referred to others monthly?
 0 1-5 6-10 11-15
 16 or more
5. On average, how many people visit your blog monthly?
 0-50 51-100 101-150
 151-200 201 or more

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