# Information and communication technology use continuance behavioral intention: Differential effect based on socio-economic status

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# Abstract

In the global information society, the importance of the Internet cannot be overemphasized. Unfortunately, a case in point is Africa, where, as per 2017 statistics, only 9.4 % of the population use the Internet [25]. While tremendous efforts have been made to address global Internet penetration, recent studies and statistics still indicate the digital inequality still exists today (Yu et al, 2016) and it prevents some individuals to benefit from the digital opportunities. The aim of this paper is to understand the difference in Internet use continuance by people of different economic status. The finding showed that satisfaction is the strongest precursor for Internet use continuance and it affects stronger the socio-economically advantaged groups than the socio-economically disadvantaged people. The results imply that different strategies should be adopted to bridge the digital inequality basis of socio-economic status more specifically income levels.

*Keywords:* use continuance, digital inequality, socio-economic status, income level.

# **1. Introduction**

In the global information society, the importance of the Internet cannot be overemphasized. Statistics showed that nearly 9.4 % of people in Africa are Internet users [25] whereas only 2.72% of Ivorian populations had access to the broadband internet [25]. This relatively low Internet penetration rate signals a problem that may threaten the economic development, governmental efficiency, and ultimately the global competitiveness of African countries.

The international agencies, the Governments as well as some private initiatives are trying to close the gap. However, digital inequality between individuals with different backgrounds prevents the socioeconomically disadvantaged from exploring digital opportunities [36], [26]. Digital inequality is one of the most critical issues in the knowledge economy. While it is tempting to believe that digital inequality can be solved purely by providing better access to ICT, prior studies have suggested that providing technology access and creating conditions for its initial usage is only the first step and does not guarantee continued intention to use ICT [33], [5], [6], [21], [21].

While tremendous efforts have been made to address global Internet penetration and access to the internet. recent studies and statistics still indicate that access to computers and the internet is uneven and the digital inequality still exists today [55], [51]. A case in point is Africa, where, as per 2017 statistics, only 9.4 % of the population use the Internet [25]. There have been several studies conducted to provide a better and deeper understanding of the phenomena. Yet, some key dimensions of the digital inequality have been ignored so far [55]. Indeed, an examination of studies in this area reveals that researchers continue to focus on information technology access and have paid less attention to usage. Policy makers often make the implicit assumption that the advantaged and disadvantaged people will respond to the same technology in similar ways [21]. That may not be a valid assumption.

The aim of this paper is to understand differences between socio-economically advantaged and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups Internet use continuance behavioral intention. From that, we will determine what prevents disadvantaged groups from benefiting from continued Internet use. The study is conducted in Ivory Coast, a French speaking country located in West Africa.

Studies have indicated that digital inequality exists across a variety of demographic, ethnic, and geographic dimensions [34], [36]; [48]. Among these dimensions, income and education represent the most important factors in distinguishing ICT use or non-use [36]; [29]; [26]. Since education and income are very correlated, in this study, we will use income as boundary or criteria to distinguish socioeconomically advantaged from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. More specifically, since there is a lack of reliable statistical databases in most of the developing countries, we classified socioeconomic groups from the collected data. Indeed, socioeconomically disadvantaged people are those who make up to 100 000 CFA. While their counterpart are above that income level.

URI: http://hdl.handle.net/10125/50372 ISBN: 978-0-9981331-1-9 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

#### 2. Research Model and Hypotheses

In this research, we will integrate the technology acceptance model (TAM) and [5] model. both models present complementary perspective for understanding IT usage intention [6]. TAM is theoretically a crosssectional model in that it predicts it usage based on user perception while [5]'s model is a longitudinal model where pre-usage expectations are temporally separated from post-usage construct such as disconfirmation and satisfaction, which collectively shape technology use continuance behavior [41]. Besides, we propose, as other authors [49] and [32] have suggested, that the contextual factors can moderate the relations between the ICT use continuance and prior beliefs (e.g., expectations, perceived usefulness and satisfaction). The moderator factor adopted in this study is socioeconomic status.

Below we present the theoretical rationale for the causal relationships of the research model presented in figure 1.

technology. At a general level, a person is satisfied with information technology use when it supplies things of value. Values are those things that people consciously or subconsciously want to seek. There are a number of studies which have indicated what people expect or want to attain by using an information technology. When people use an information technology and gain a benefit from its usage, they are more satisfied and develop intention to use it more. According to [6] and [37] user satisfaction is the most immediate motivator that determines an individual's behavioral intention to continued use.



Figure 1: Research model

## 2.1. Behavioral intention

Behavioral Intention is a measure of the strength of one's intention to perform a specified behavior [2]. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), behavior or action of individuals is determined by intention (behavioral intention: BI). Previous studies have established that "intention" is a good proxy variable for future "use" [37]; [48].

#### 2.2 Satisfaction

Satisfaction can be defined as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the use of information

User satisfaction is posited as a linear function proportional to disconfirmation. Disconfirmation is defined as the discrepancy between a user's preadoption expectations and perceived performance ([12]; [43], [37]. Disconfirmation is positive when the perceived performance is higher than pre-adoption expectations and the user is satisfied, or is negative when perceived performance falls short of expectations and the user is dissatisfied. The socio-economically people who have consistent interaction with Internet will be more likely to validate their positive expectations about using Internet than their opponent groups who have less occasion to use it.

[22], showed the socio-economically disadvantaged with lower income tend to use ICT for entertainment

purposes, while the socio-economically advantaged to use ICT for instrumental reason. In other words, the pleasure or joy of using an ICT seems to be the most important driver for socio-economically disadvantaged people to be satisfied and continue to use and ICT, whereas ICT usefulness is more important for socioeconomically advantaged people [22].

Besides, [23] and [13] identify two main sources of motivation for people to adopt a technological innovation. These two sources of motivation are intrinsic motivation (pleasure or joy), and extrinsic motivation (usefulness). [13] support that the IT usefulness is extrinsic motivation, whereas perceived pleasure or joys of IT use is related to intrinsic motivation. From this perspective, a person will adopt an information technology because of the pleasure (intrinsic motivation) that it offers or utility gained from its usage.

Based on the above, we have said, we state theses hypothesis:

H1: Socio-economics status will moderate the positive influence of satisfaction on continued use intention such that the influence is stronger for the socioeconomically advantaged group than for the socioeconomically disadvantaged group

H2a: Socio-economic status will moderate the positive influence of usefulness on satisfaction such that the influence is stronger for the socioeconomically advantaged group than for the socioeconomically disadvantaged group

H2b: Socio-economic status will moderate the positive influence of pleasure on satisfaction such that the influence is stronger for the socioeconomically disadvantaged group than for the socioeconomically advantaged group

H2c: Socio-economic status will moderate the positive influence of disconfirmation on satisfaction such that the influence is stronger for the socioeconomically advantaged group than for the socioeconomically disadvantaged group

# 3. Methodology

In this section, we define the method and instruments to reach our research objectives. More

specifically, we present the questionnaire development processes, data collection strategy and analysis strategy.

# 3.1. Questionnaire Development, Sampling and Data Analysis method

Most of the questionnaire items used in this study were borrowed from [31]'s questionnaire which has been already translated and pretested in a Francophone environment. The remaining constructs, were borrowed directly from past expectations-confirmation studies [5] and [6] and then subjected to back-translation procedures whereby the questionnaire items were translated from English to French. Following [31], we employed the random stratified sampling approach to make the study's sample representative of the population. The partial least squares (PLS) statistical analysis method as supported by the Smart PLS software [44] running on a personal computer was used to assess the study's hypotheses.

#### **3.2.** Descriptive Statistics

Administration of the survey produced responses from a total of 1000 printed questionnaires. Of the received 600 responses, 89 were dropped from the sample for various reasons, among them incomplete response and choice of more 1 indictor for the same items. This represents a response rate of 60%. The descriptive statistics for the study's socio-demographic variables - age, gender, experience, income and level of education. Socio-demographic variables examined in this study are: gender, age, experience of using internet, income and education level. Sixty-three point four percent (63.4%) of respondents are males compared to 35% of females. Respondents are relatively young as almost 62% of them are less than 40 years old. Interestingly, respondents seem to be familiarized with Internet usage as more than 52.4% of these respondents have been using internet for between three and more than 6 years. Finally, almost 73 % of Internet users are well educated (above secondary school). They access Internet mainly at Cybercafé and 50% among them are making less than 100 000 CFA a month.

## **3.2.** Testing for Validity

The validity of variables measurement was assessed through the reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The reliability, the convergent and discriminant validities in this study were evaluated following the rules suggested by [40], [20], [53], [15].

#### 3.2.1. Reliability of Measurements

In PLS, the psychometric properties of the scales used to measure the hypothesized model's reliability and the validity of its constructs are measured and articulated by the measurement model. Measures of reliability include the composite reliability each construct's indicators. The results for the composite reliability of each individual construct are presented in Table 1.

The value of composite reliability for each latent variable was above the threshold value of 0.7 recommended for empirical research [40]. We can

therefore claim that the internal consistency of the measurements in our study is satisfactory.

Table 1: Reliability and average variance extracted (AVE)

Constructs	Socioe disadv	economically pantaged (SED)	Socioeconomically advantaged (SEA)		
	AVE	Composite Reliability	AVE	Composite Reliability	
Disconfirmation (3)	0.59	0.80	0.59	0.80	
Plaisir (3)	0.76	0.90	0.75	0.90	
Satisfaction (3)	0.57	0.79	0.74	0.89	
Intention (3)	0.72	0.88	0.67	0.89	
Usefulness (4)	0.66	0.85	0.71	0.88	

\*. The number in parentheses indicates the items in the scale

#### 3.2.2. Convergent Validity

The tests for convergent validity are that each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) needs to be equal or greater than 0.5 [14]; Wixom & Watson, 2001) – table 2 provides these results; and, that each item's loading onto its respective construct should be equal to or greater than 0.5 [53]. According to the results which appear in the table 1, each construct yielded an AVE greater than the specified indicator above. Therefore, we can conclude the convergent validity of the survey instrument used in this study.

#### 3.2.3. Discriminant Validity

The objective of this test is to assess the independence of the variables. The average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct was also assessed for purposes of in determining the model's discriminant validity. A model's discriminant validity is satisfactory if the square root of the AVE of each construct in the model is greater than the variance shared between the construct and other constructs in the model [20]. As is evident in Tables 2, the square root of the AVE of each construct is greater that the constructs' correlations. Therefore, all constructs have satisfactory discriminant validity.

	Disconfirmation	Plaisir	Satisfaction	Intention	Usefulness
Disconfirmation	0.67				
Plaisir	0.551253	0.59			
Satisfaction	0.645642	0.510425	0.76		
Intention	0.541796	0.457922	0.603752	0.51	
Usefulness	0.643459	0.487431	0.594816	0.534050	0.72

#### Table 2 Assessment of Discriminant Validity

# **3.3.** Research model assessment or tests of Hypotheses

PLS algorithm was performed to evaluate item weight and, bootstrapping was performed to evaluate T-statistics [44]. A Two-tailed T test is considered with 1.645, 1.96, and 2.576 critical values of T at significant level (p-value) 0.1, 0.05, and 0.01 respectively [52], [8], [42[44].

Table 4: Path analysis for all respondents	
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Paths	Path Coefficients	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	T Statistics
Disconfirmation -> Satisfaction	0.379335	0.383598	0.069938	0.069938	5.423894***
Pleasure -> Satisfaction	0.170983	0.181282	0.062019	0.062019	2.756938**
Satisfaction -> Intention	0.603752	0.605402	0.043697	0.043697	13.816916***
Usefulness -> Satisfaction	0.267387	0.257981	0.077719	0.077719	3.440438***

Path coefficient is significant at: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05; \*p < 0.1

Paths	Path Coefficients	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P-Value
<b>Disconfirmation -&gt; Satisfaction</b>	0.418	0.416	0.075	5.561	0.000***
Pleasure -> Satisfaction	0.303	0.306	0.074	4.096	0.000***
Satisfaction -> Intention	0.700	0.701	0.040	17.596	0.000***
Usefulness -> Satisfaction	0.153	0.153	0.081	1.885	0.059*

#### Table 5: Path analysis for socio-economically advantaged group

Path coefficient is significant at: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05; \*p< 0.1

Table 6: Path analysis for socio-economically disadvantaged group

Paths	Path coefficients	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P-Value
Disconfirmation -> Satisfaction	0.392	0.394	0.063	6.202	0.000***
Pleasure -> Satisfaction	0.182	0.185	0.058	3.152	0.002***
Satisfaction -> Intention	0.574	0.576	0.047	12.199	0.000***
Usefulness -> Satisfaction	0.188	0.189	0.070	2.689	0.007***

Path coefficient is significant at: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05; \*p < 0.1

Table 4 reveals that all the relations were supported for all the groups. While we requested Internet users' respondents to participate in the survey, the collected data enabled us to evaluate the relative influence of Satisfaction on Intention to continue to use the Internet. As can be seen in tables 4, 5 and 6, the primary outcome continued intention to use is explained by its main drivers. The Satisfaction is influenced by Usefulness, Disconfirmation and the perceived pleasure. It has been established extensively in the technology acceptance literature that users' Satisfaction plays a great role in explaining the intention to continue to use of a technology. Our finding is confirming that assumption.

two groups on base of income. The bootstrapping method was applied to test our proposed model by using smart PLS, a structural equation model assessing software. Table 7 shows the detailed model test results predicting internet use continuance through the mediation of satisfaction. The four columns of results show the comparisons of results from high income (socioeconomically advantaged) and low income (socioeconomically disadvantaged) groups as proposed in this work. To test our hypotheses associated with differential reaction, we compared the coefficients of individual paths between the structural models of high income and low income groups. According to [22], this analysis is similar to a t-test of the moderation effect of social status on the path strength across groups. We referred to [46] to apply a PLS multi groups tests to assess statistical differences in path coefficients for each pair of paths as in the table below.

# 3.3.1. Multi-Group and paths analysis for

#### differences across groups

In order to determine the cross group differential influence, we have divided the sample into

rable 7. Research hypothesis test								
Hypothesis	Model Causal Paths	Path	Path	Difference	Standard	T-statistic	Hypothesis	
		Coefficient	Coefficient for	in Path	Error	for	Validation	
		for Socio-	Socio-	Coefficients		Difference		
		Economically	Economically			in Path		
		Advantaged	Disadvantaged			Coefficients		
		User-Group	User-Group					
H1	Satisfaction -> Intention	0.70	0.39	0.126	0.003874	32.61***	Fully supported	
							Partially supported	
	Usefulness -> Satisfaction						(because of	
H2a		0.15	0.19	0.035	0.006919	-5.09***	directionality)	
							Partially supported	
	Pleasure -> Satisfaction						(because of	
H2b		0.30	0.18	0.120	0.006130	19.70***	directionality)	
H2c	Disconfirmation -> Satisfaction	0.42	0.39	0.02	0.006371	4.13***	Fully supported	

Table 7. Research hypothesis test

Path coefficient is significant at: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05; \*p < 0.1; Ns non significant Partially supported indicate that the positive influence of the drivers on the dependent variables hold but the differences between groups are not realized from performing the T-test

#### 4. Discussion

This study seeks to provide a theoretical framework to investigate the antecedents of Internet use continuance in a developing African country such as the Ivory Coast. In particular, the main objective is to identify the factors which distinguish the socioeconomically disadvantaged from advantaged group and prevent them from taking advantage of digital opportunity. The impact of the factors identified in the research model on user's continued use intention is explained below.

#### 4.1. Intention to continue to use Internet

After consolidating and examining the results in both socio-economic groups, it seems that the relations between the predictor variables Satisfaction and our dependent variables (Intention to continue to use) are statistically significant according to the results in the table 4. These are consistent with the previous findings.

The positive influence of satisfaction is supported by the data for the both socio-economic groups according to the results computed in the table 4. In addition, the moderating effect on the link from satisfaction to use continuance intention was supported in the table 7 as theorized. Both groups do continue Internet use based directly on an assessment of utilitarian and hedonic value gained from the usage but, the advantaged groups are more sensitive to satisfaction to continue to use the Internet than the opponent group. From the descriptive statistics of the study, the Internet is primarily used for information search, sending an email and collaboration with colleagues. We may think reasonably that those usages supply values which are more important to advantaged groups than disadvantaged persons as theorized.

# 4.2. Influence of the antecedents of

## Satisfaction

We theorized that the perceived usefulness has a positive influence on Internet users' satisfaction and that influence is stronger for the socio-economically advantaged group than the socio-economically disadvantaged people. Further, the study finds, contrary to what was hypothesized, that when it comes to the impact of usefulness on satisfaction (hypothesis H2a), the disadvantaged group of users report a statistically stronger effect than the advantaged users. It appears that internet use, even among the socio-economically advantaged population of users in Ivory Coast had not advanced to the higher-order usages where the internet becomes an instrument for productivity and productivity gains. The descriptive results showed that, across the entire study's sample - including both the socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged groups- the internet was mainly used for information search, chatting, and interpersonal communications. This finding is consistent with the finding in [14] who reported that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Internet is used mostly for sending email, social networking and video sharing. Therefore, the socio-economic advantaged people may not find them as being radically instrumental for productivity gains - at least when use of the internet for these activities is contrasted to the conventional ways in which this group of users has accessed information-capital and business intelligence.

Previous research has most often supported the conjecture that Perceived Usefulness is a major determinant of the Users' satisfaction with a new ICT across technologies and cultures. The finding in this study that, for certain user-groups perceived usefulness may not be as strong a precursor for satisfaction with a new technology, indicate that nature of use may contribute to disparities in digital-society participation that consequently contribute to a digital inequality even within a society where all users have somewhat comparable access to the internet.

We did find significant relationship between the perceived pleasure and the satisfaction for both group. This is consistent with some previous studies support that the socio-economically which disadvantaged people use information technology for its playfulness or for fun. However, the group differential effect between both group is in favor of the advantaged groups contrary to what was theorized. This is inconsistent with our assumption (hypothesis H2b) but it is similar to some previous studies as [22] which support that the impact of ICT playfulness on socio-economically disadvantaged people's continued use intention is time sensitive. The playfulness is salient in the early stage of ICT adoption by socioeconomically disadvantaged people but it is not significant for use continuance. When an individual first begins to use a new information and communication technology (ICT) medium, playfulness often decreases because its use requires new skills and new manners of interaction. Socioeconomically advantaged people have better information literacy and digital skills than their counterpart group.

The study has established that a positive relationship exists between disconfirmation and users' satisfaction. As theorized, the study has been able to detect a significant differential effect between our two targeted groups (hypothesis H2c). The results indicated that the advantaged groups are more satisfied after experiencing internet persistent and consistent use. We can conclude that they are in good position to take advantage of the opportunities offered by internet and fulfill their initial expectations through their perceived usefulness and enjoyment (pleasure) than the disadvantaged groups.

Thus this study demonstrates the viability of employing a use-continuance theoretical model in examining the problem of the digital inequality, and identifies some antecedent factors that distinguish how continued-use behavior (as assessed by use-intention) may prevent or inhibit one group of users from taking advantage of digital opportunities to the same extent as some other group of users despite both groups having comparable physical-access capabilities to the internet. Therefore, concerning the digital inequality, this study indicates that access per-se may not be a sufficient antidote to the problem of the digital inequality. We recognize that the model may not be parsimonious or comprehensive. However, it affords a starting point in examining digital divide challenges in a post accessrestrictions internet world.

# 5. Study relevance

In this era of knowledge economy where no nation can avoid using ICTs at the risk of becoming

irreversibly marginalized, the results of the study could help in ensuring greater success in the use of ICTs in developing countries with a similar cultural environment to that of Ivory Coast. Indeed, the results could assist governments and international organizations in their search for a solution to build an information-based society in developing countries.

This study will help the key stakeholders in adoption and use of internet based technology to understand the Psychological factors that influence continued use intention, which is likely to play a key role in defining the long term success of internet based communication use. Consequently, knowing the psychological factors behind the adoption of the Internet based technology would represent a tremendous competitive advantage for businesses. It is imperative that businesses consider virtual communities as a new market place. Gaining such an understanding is important because Internet based communication tools provide a solid base for businesses and governments to expand the potential market for their services, to improve the attractiveness of communities for business visitors and tourists, to give local entrepreneurs a chance to participate in building a professional network, and to lowering barriers to entry into the market.

## 6. Study limitation

As is typical, this research also presents limitations. It is possible that the data collected on the Internet are not easily generalizable to other ICTs, and the model adopted in this study should be tested on other technologies to assess the external validity of the study. Another limitation of the study is related to the fact that it is cross-sectional, and thus does not reflect the evolution of the variables studied over time. In this sense, it would be advisable for future research to conduct a longitudinal study to study the evolution of beliefs, attitudes over the time (before, during and after the adoption of a technology).

# 7. Acknowledgments

The author is grateful for the financial support from the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of CODESRIA. He also thanks Mark Keil, the Board of Advisors Professor of Computer Information Systems at Georgia State University for his advice and guidelines at the early stage of this work.

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