

How do Digital Divides Determine Social Media Users' Aspirations to Influence Others?

Sanna Malinen, Aki Koivula & Ilkka Koiranen,
University of Turku, Finland

Presentation at #SMS2020 Conference

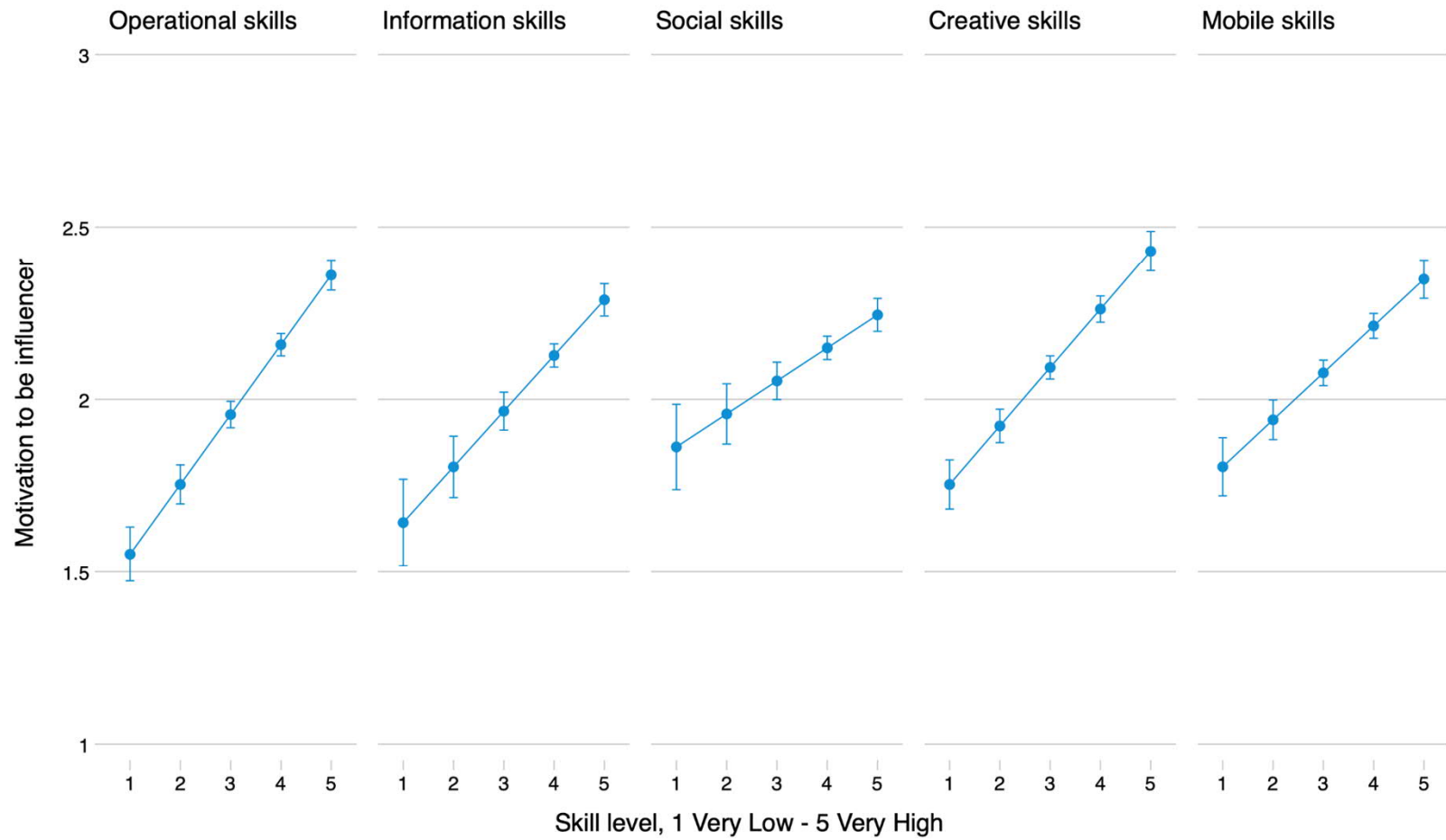


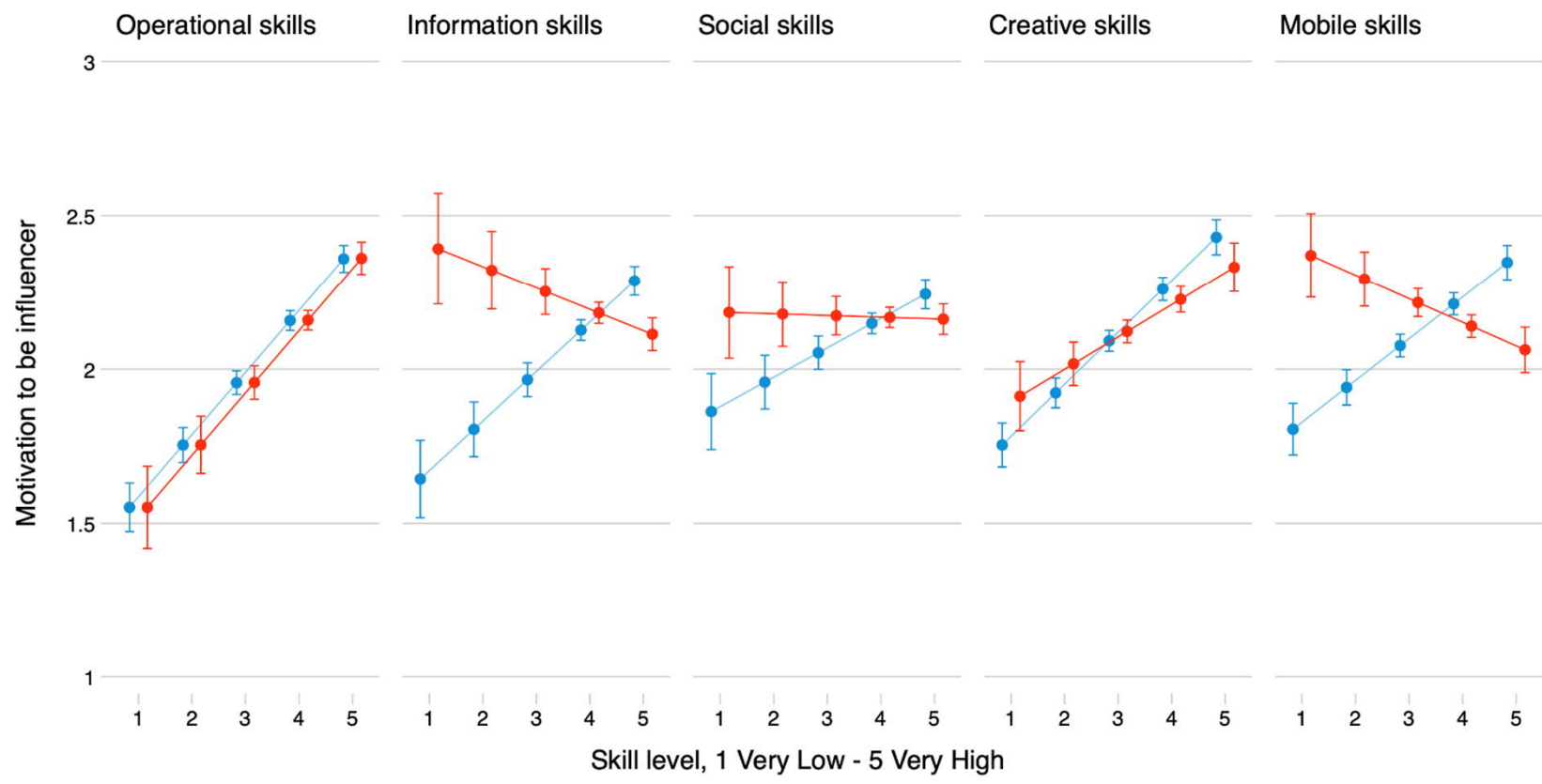
Influencing others online

- Social media powerful environment for influencing people's opinions
 - increases political awareness
 - exposes to diverse and contradictory views
 - social network structure gives visibility for opinion leaders
- Opinion leaders are active content producers (Weeks et al. 2017), interactive (Huffaker 2010), and have good argumentation skills (Gil de Zúñiga et al. 2018).

This study

- Who are social media users with a motivation to influence opinions of others?
- Are there digital divides in influential social media use regarding their demographics and digital skills?
- We measured digital skills using the Internet Skills Scale (ISS) by van Deursen et al. (2016).
- Nationwide survey for Finnish people (N=3,724).





● Direct effect
● Total effect (adjusted with demographics, political interest and other skills)

Main findings

- Gender and age predict influential social media use: men and people under 50 years were more likely to be influential.
- Education did not predict influential use when other socio-demographic factors were controlled.
- Technical and content creation skills were the most significant predictors for influential use.

Conclusion

- There are digital divides in influential motivation.
- Persons who are more skilled dominate online discussion with the intention to affect others' opinions.
- Which are the key skills for effective online participation?
- Have skills become even more dividing factor among users?

Thank you for watching!

Contact information

Sanna Malinen: sanna.malinen@utu.fi

Aki Koivula: akjeko@utu.fi

Ilkka Koiranen: ilalko@utu.fi

