



Intention to use a free voluntary service

The effects of social influence, knowledge and perceptions

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Abstract

Purpose – This empirical study aims to understand the interrelationship among the key technology adoption factors including social influence, individual existing knowledge, and individual perceptions of technology (i.e. usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment) and their effects on individual intention to use a free voluntary service.

Design/methodology/approach – The survey method is employed to collect data from universities offering the free mobile messaging service. A structural equation modeling analysis technique is used to analyze data reliability and validity in the measurement model and examine causal relationships among the constructs in the structural model.

Findings – The results show that social influence affects individual knowledge and perceptions of the service (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived enjoyment) and successively influences the individual intention to use the free voluntary service. This study indicates that the intrinsic value of perceived enjoyment has a greater impact than the extrinsic value of perceived usefulness in terms of its effect on individual intention to use a free voluntary service. In addition, the effect of perceived usefulness of alternative systems should be taken into account when using perceived usefulness from the technology acceptance model to predict individual's technology adoption decisions under the free voluntary setting.

Originality/value – This study fills the gap in the technology adoption literatures regarding the free voluntary service adoption based on social influence, individual knowledge, and individual perceptions of technology. It assists academics to understand the drivers of technology acceptance under the free voluntary setting and provides guidance for organizations to increase users' acceptability of their free voluntary services.

Keywords Voluntary services, Adoption, Social influence, Intention, Ease of use, Usefulness, Enjoyment, Knowledge, User satisfaction, User studies

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Previous studies have applied theory of reasoned action (TRA) and technology acceptance model (TAM) to understand the factors influencing individual adoption of technology. TRA proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) is widely used to examine how social norms of compliance, conformity, and identification may operate to influence behavior. It posits that social influences "subjective norms" along with personal attitudes could be used to predict personal behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Subjective norm represents perceived external pressures to perform or not perform behavior and captures the essence of social influence (Lee *et al.*, 2006). In later years, Davis (1989) purposed TAM to explain the psychological interaction of a user with technology. TAM examines users' behavior

