

Chapter 4

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) Ajzen (1988)

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ABSTRACT

The Theory of Planned Behavior is widely used to predict human behaviors in many disciplines. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, Attitude towards the target behavior, Subjective Norms about engaging in the behavior and Perceived Behavior Control influence intention. In addition, an individual's display of a certain behavior is determined by his or her intent to perform that behavior. This chapter describes the origin and history of the Theory of Planned Behavior, its purpose, its limitations and its applications in order to examine acceptance, adoption, use, and continuance of use of Information Systems and services.

INTRODUCTION

Human behaviors and actions are determined by their intentions, interests and motivations; thus, studying human behavior helps identifying the intentions behind people's actions. However, it is difficult to clearly identify the reasons why people act in a certain way because there are many hidden variables that influence human behaviors and these variables also vary according to situations and contexts. In addition, there could be other intervening variables, crossover effects and other theoretical explanations for the behaviors.

There are also biological, cultural, and situational determinants which impact people's attitudes, beliefs, plans, values, goals, and interests. Ajzen (1988) explained that personal attitudes and personality traits, social norms and values, and the environmental conditions surrounding a person are factors that can be used predict human behaviors.

Information systems are becoming an integral part of people's personal and professional lives. Moreover, the use of information systems is a concern for organizations seeking to improve its efficiency and productivity (Legris et al, 2003). Thus, examining factors that influence technology acceptance, adaptation and used is very essential for its success. A number of theories have been applied to under-

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stand user acceptance for technology over the last two decades such as Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) used to explain role of technology in affecting users' intentions toward their behavior (Davis et al. 1989), the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) used explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) used to predict behavioral intention (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991; Taylor and Todd 1995).

The TPB is one of the best supported social psychological theories with respect to predicting human behavior (Sommer, 2011). It provides rich information, in terms of human social aspects as compared to other models, to predict human behaviors. For this reason, TPB is powerful in predicting and explaining human behavior (Mathieson, 1991; Taylor and Tod, 1995a, b; Al-Lozi, 2012). This chapter introduces the theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) which has been extensively used within the information systems (IS) field to predict and explain human behavior.

THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991) is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Intent plays a critical role in TRA, and it is considered as the greatest predictor of a specific behavior. For the TRA, individual's Attitude toward the Behavior and the pressures of perceived Subjective Norms are major determinants of intention (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) stated that in general, individuals will intend to perform a behavior when they evaluate it positively and when others believe that they should perform it. However, attitude and Subjective Norms vary according to the intent, and also vary from person to another (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). TRA has been criticized for not considering some factors, which are frequently used by social scientists, to explain behavior such as personality characteristics and demographic variables (e.g. age, gender). Moreover, this theory has excluded factors such as social status. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) considered these factors as external variables and they also recognized their importance. However, TRA does not account for perceived behavioral control. This deficiency has led Ajzen's (1988) to come up with the TPB.

The major components of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Attitude toward the Behavior, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control) as designed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1980, 2010) and background factors are presented in Figure 1. Attitude toward the Behavior measures the degree to which a person has a negative or positive evaluation toward his/her performance of the behavior. Subjective Norms refer to what individuals believe other key people in their lives think about whether or not the individual should perform the behavior. Perceived Behavioral Control refers to people's perceptions of whether or not they can perform that specific behavior and the ease of performing. Beliefs are based on a wide range of background factors: behavioural beliefs produce attitude towards behaviour, normative beliefs result in Subjective Norms and control beliefs generate perceived behaviour control. The combination of all these elements leads to the formation of a behavioural intention (Ajzen 2002) as showing in Figure 1.

Attitude

Attitude is defined as individual's positive or negative feeling associated with performing a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes are informed by beliefs needed to engage in the behavior. An indi-

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