

Chapter 73

Examining Mobile SNS Continuance From a Dual Perspective of Social Capital and Privacy Concern

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ABSTRACT

This article contends that due to the intense competition, it is crucial for mobile social networking services (SNS) providers to retain users and facilitate their continuance. Integrating both perspectives of social capital and privacy concern, this research examined mobile SNS continuance. Social capital includes three dimensions: structural capital, relational capital and cognitive capital. The results indicated that both social capital and privacy concerns have significant effects on continuing usage. The results imply that service providers need to develop social capital and curb privacy concerns in order to facilitate users' continuance usage of mobile SNS.

INTRODUCTION

The application of the fourth generation (4G) communication technologies has triggered mobile internet development. For example, the number of mobile internet users in China has exceeded 724 million, accounting for 96.3% of its internet population (751 million) (CNNIC, 2017). In US, about 57% of adults accessed internet through cell phones (Pew Research Center, 2013). Faced with the great market potential, internet service providers have released a variety of mobile services, such as mobile instant messaging, mobile payment and mobile social networking services (SNS). Among them, mobile SNS as an interactive application have been popular among users. A few representative products include Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, and QQ Zone. A Pew report (2015) indicated that about 76% of American internet users have been using SNS. Nevertheless, only acquiring users and facilitating their initial adoption may be not enough for service providers. If users discontinue their usage after initial adoption,

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service providers cannot recover the costs spent on acquiring new users and make profits. In addition, intense competition exists among multiple mobile SNS products. If they cannot retain users, users may easily switch from a service provider to an alternative one. This highlights the need to retain users and facilitate their post-adoption usage.

With the help of mobile networks and devices, mobile SNS enable users to interact with their friends and peers in their social circles at anytime from anywhere. They can communicate with each other conveniently without the temporal and spatial constraints. The frequent interactions between users may strengthen social relationships and develop social capital, which means “the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded with, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit” (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Social capital as an intangible resource may facilitate users’ behaviour (Chen et al., 2017). On the other hand, mobile SNS collect much information about users, such as their demographic information and preferences. Furthermore, mobile SNS may adopt location-based technologies such as GPS to acquire users’ location information. This may arouse users’ privacy concern and increase their privacy risk, which may further decrease their continuance intention.

Previous studies have drawn on multiple theories such as the motivational theory (Tang et al., 2016), relationship quality (Hsu et al., 2017), trust (Hajli et al., 2017), and information systems continuance model (Lin et al., 2017) to examine SNS user behavior. Factors such as perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment are identified to affect user adoption. These factors mainly reflect the individual motivations affecting user behaviour. However, previous studies have seldom examined the effect of social capital embedded within the social networks on mobile SNS user adoption. This may hinder our understanding of mobile SNS user behaviour. As noted earlier, mobile SNS users have built close social networking relationships through frequent social interactions. This may lead to social capital development, which has a significant effect on their continuance. Thus, it is necessary to examine social capital on mobile SNS. In addition, due to the significant privacy risk such as location information disclosure associated with using mobile SNS, it is also necessary to take privacy concern into consideration when examining user behavior. Thus, this research combines both perspectives of social capital and privacy concern to examine continuance usage of mobile SNS. The results provide a complete understanding of mobile SNS user behaviour by integrating a dual perspective of both enablers (social capital) and inhibitors (privacy concern) of continuance usage. This enriches extant research that has focused on user behaviour from a single perspective. In addition, the results also disclosed the different effects of three social capital dimensions on user behaviour.

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

SNS User Adoption

As a popular application, SNS user behaviour has received great attention from information systems researchers. Theories such as the motivational theory and the information systems continuance model are often used as the theoretical bases. Tang et al. (2016) found that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations affect mobile coupon sharing on SNS. Intrinsic motivations include sense of self-worth and socializing, whereas extrinsic motivations include economic reward and reciprocity. Lin et al. (2017) integrated the

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