

Chapter 3

Study of Intentions to Use Cloud CRM Within Saudi SMEs: Integrating TAM and TPB Frameworks

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ABSTRACT

This chapter attempts to study the intentions to use cloud-based CRM applications through a combination between a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and a Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). To test the different links identified in the research model, a research questionnaire was prepared and sent to marketing managers within Saudi SMEs in Saudi Arabia. A total of 41 useful questionnaires were collected. The authors opted to the structural equation modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) to analyze data. The tests are prepared with XLstat software since it integrates both factor analysis and PLS modules. Among the main statistical analyses, the authors conclude that the TPB-TAM is suitable to study cloud CRM. From a managerial perspective, the authors expect that cloud CRM is perceived with good impression and that this new technology should be implemented strongly and gradually in SMEs to improve the quality of services provided to customers and organizations.

INTRODUCTION

It is very important to notice that the current world is developing toward the use of nascent technologies in many fields. In addition to that, there are lots of changes in the perceived aspects of providing services to the customers. These changes refer to the customers themselves as they are moving toward using high technologies in their social interactions. As such, firms need to find additional tools to interact more closely with customers. The development of several disruptive technologies linked to cloud computing represents a unique opportunity to perform a digital transformation in the way of interactions with customers.

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This study aims to clarify how managers in Saudi SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) will perceive and deal with cloud CRM (Customer Relationship Management) technology by studying the intentions to use cloud CRM applications through SMEs and the main factors that could influence such intentions.

The main goal of CRM is to create a good and long run relationship with selected customers. Indeed, according to Baran and Galka (2017), “the purpose of CRM systems is not simply to retain customers” but to “identify, retain, and please the right kind of customer and to foster their repeat usage”.

When presented as a service, Cloud CRM would generate the benefits of CRM combined with the multiple benefits of cloud computing (high scalability, accessibility, cost saving, etc.). However, even beneficial, every cloud technology is presented as a risky alternative. Moreover, previous studies showed that many managers were reluctant toward cloud adoption and use (Smaoui Hachicha and Mezghani, 2018).

Based on a literature review and a survey research, the current chapter attempts to propose a research model that could be used to study Saudi managers’ intentions to use cloud CRM. In fact, despite the existence of several studies on cloud adoption and use, few of them focused on cloud CRM issues.

The proposed model is based on a combination between the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). TAM “is an information systems theory developed in order to make predictions about technology acceptance. This model suggests that when users are presented with a new technology, a number of factors influence their decision about how and when they will use. TAM is based on the causal relationship belief - attitude - intention - behavior within the theory of reasoned action (TRA)” (Lala, 2014). TAM is “designed to provide an adequate explanation for and a prediction of a diverse user population’s acceptance of a wide array of IT [Information Technologies] within various organizational contexts” (Hu et al., 1999).

As stated by Venkatesh and Davis (1996), TAM factors can be combined with other external variables. A literature review shows that the integration of TPB-linked factors with TAM provides a deep understanding of intentions to use IT (Lee, 2009; Safeena et al., 2013; Yu et al., 2018). Indeed, besides largely supported in several academic researches, TPB and TAM present common factors (intentions and attitudes) which facilitate their integration.

By following a quantitative approach, the current chapter aims to test the TAM-TPB integration in the case of cloud CRM. From a managerial perspective, this chapter attempts to formulate some recommendations to practitioners in the Saudi context regarding cloud CRM issues. Indeed, even this context is characterized by a rapid development in cloud computing adoption and use, very few experiences about cloud concerns are reported in academic research focusing on such context (Alharbi et al., 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Relationship Management and Digitalization Challenges

According to Baran and Galka (2017), CRM can be defined from different perspectives, but the holistic definition is proposed by Payne and Frow (2005). These authors consider CRM as “...a strategic approach that is concerned with creating improved shareholder value through the development of appropriate relationships with key customers and customer segments. CRM unites the potential of relationship marketing strategies and IT to create profitable, long-term relationships with customers and other key stakeholders.”

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