


Continued Usage and Dependency of Smartphones

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ABSTRACT

Smartphones have become an integral part of everyone's life. Being a powerful communication device, the number of subscribers is persistently increasing every year. Younger generation are often the early adopters of smartphones. Because of its educational and entertaining options students have adopted them easily. This study aims to identify the factors that lead to student dependency on smartphones and thus leading to continued usage. The data was collected from undergraduate students and was analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM). The results of the study show that performance expectancy, social needs, social influence, convenience has a positive relationship on dependency on smartphones and dependency on smartphones has a positive relationship on continued usage of smartphones. The findings have led to theoretical and practical implications and future researches are suggested.

KEYWORDS

Continued Usage, Convenience, Dependency, Performance, Smartphones, Social Influence, Social Needs, Students

INTRODUCTION

Smartphones have changed the face of mobile technology and there is an increased popularity among the young adults on the use of smartphones. It has emerged as a powerful device that blends the use of both computer and telephone. With the mobile data and Wi-Fi connections people use Internet at an increasing rate. Smartphones have become fully capable of what a computer can do, like browsing websites, navigating through maps, sending mails etc. Thus, smartphones make lives easier for its users. Students of this age depend on internet in a great deal. It has also become a status quotient for the youngsters to own a smartphone (Nawaz & Ahmad, 2012). In short, smartphones have become a tool for communication, entertainment, learning, and internet browsing.

With the conveniences offered by smartphones, adolescents strongly attach themselves to these devices. The student without the smartphone is ubiquitous in educational institutions. The constant companionship of the student and the phone reflects on thoughts of what they are reading or working

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on these devices. Many smartphone related studies say that users may not be able to live without them (Wajcman, Bittman & Jones, 2007). Being the millennial generation, they have the privilege of growing up with devices like smartphones, computers, video games, and instant messaging than that their parents and grandparents had (Bomhold, 2013). Their thirst for knowledge is answered immediately with the usage of smartphones that are connected to the internet. This technology has also been a necessity for students these days for accessing internet and related learning. The aim of this paper is to provide the list of factors that lead to the students' dependency on smartphones that in turn leads to continued usage. This paper brings out a model of understanding reasons for their continuous usage of smartphones.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Researchers have studied use of mobile devices and related computing devices in multiple disciplines. Much research can be found on technology acceptance, mobile computing, information seeking, and learning outcomes influenced by technology usage. Usage of smartphones among students including their academic purposes is not been explored much. For this purpose, the authors have combined both social and academic aspects to determine students' dependency on smartphones and their intention to use it continuously.

Social Influence

Smartphones have become one of the tools, which have captured the attention of students in the past few years. In society, individuals learn from observation especially from their role models. They encode their model's behaviour and perceive they behave similarly. Social influence measures the degree to which a student believes that others who he/she cares about feel that he/she should use the particular technology. At first, students use techniques that satisfy the individual users and analysing preferences. Later, students perform activities collectively like playing games, group messaging etc. Nowadays, most of the students use smartphones connected to the internet and spend time on the social networking sites (SNSs) and apps. Therefore, the inclusion of social influence as a variable in studying the dependency on smartphones is a natural evolutionary stage, as the analysis of some social factors might allow predicting group members' potential to influence and to be influenced in using a smartphone (Christensen & Schiaffino, 2014).

Various authors have studied social influence as a contributing variable in use of technology (Lu, 2014). Opinion changes in using a product or technology is largely been researched in an attempt to investigate the influence on people (Friedkin & Johnsen, 2011). Communication theories emphasize on system quality characteristics and effect on masses (McQuail, 2010). When a communication medium is new, peer opinions have a strong influence on students. In the past social psychologists have shown much interest in finding how strongly social influences motivate human behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fulk, Schmitz & Steinfield, (1990). Members in the students' social environment including their teachers, parents, friends, and celebrities are likely to wield influence on their behaviour. Theory to Reasoned Action (TRA) by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) advocates that a person's intention to use depends on attitude and subjective norms. Subjective norm is the influence of people in one's social environment on one's behavioural intentions (i.e. the perception of whether people who are important to him think he should perform the behaviour in question). In the studies related to Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), the authors believed that social influences are more likely to occur indirectly through functional outcomes (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). A framework introduced by DeLeone and McLean (1992) initiated that system quality has a substantial impact on system usage (Almutairi & Subramanian, 2005). A similar study argued that social influence is the most important factor that influences students' perceptions of Facebook for academic purposes (Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javed,

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