



Exploring the intention to continue using web-based self-service



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ABSTRACT

The popularization of Internet and the development of cloud computing have not only changed our lifestyles, but have impacted the ways in which enterprises relate with their customers. For example, customers and enterprises can now directly interact through web-based self-services (e.g., Internet banking, online ticketing, online bookstores, and online reservations) that do not require face-to-face interactions. Web-based self-services (WBSS) allow enterprises to proactively initiate contacts with customers and respond to their needs. Customers can also quickly access the services they want online, at any time and place, thus enhancing overall service efficiency. However, a review of the previous literature shows that most related studies have used the Technology Acceptance Model, which examines perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and attitude toward use, in order to investigate user behaviors when operating a WBSS. In contrast, there are few studies that examine the impact of perceived usefulness and perceived quality features on the continued intention to use a WBSS. Therefore, this study applied the questionnaire method and investigated the relationships among users' perceived usage characteristics, quality characteristics, satisfaction and continued usage intention with regard to WBSS. Based on the results, specific recommendations are provided for enterprises to enhance the intention to continue using WBSS.

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1. Introduction

High labor costs have encouraged service firms to examine delivery options that enable customers to perform certain services for themselves (Dabholkar, 1996). This has been facilitated by the growing use of technology in services, which allows new ways of doing business and transforms the interactions between customers and firms (Ku and Chen, 2013). The development of the Internet and related technologies has revolutionized the service landscape, with many companies using web-based self-services (WBSS) to improve service operations and increase service efficiency for customers (Lin and Hsieh, 2007), allowing customers to access the services that they want at any time and place (Oh Jeong and Baloglu, 2013), leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction (Bitner et al., 2000; Curran and Meuter, 2005). However, even when customers can see the benefits of using WBSS, they may avoid it if they are not comfortable with or ready to use such a technology (Meuter et al., 2003). That is to say, customers apply WBSS will vary according to the personal characteristics of different individuals.

Attitudes and behaviors related to the personal use of information technology (IT) have become a common research topic within the field of IT. For example, the Diffusion of Innovations

(DOI) approach is used to investigate how users adopt new technologies, concepts and gadgets (Rogers, 1995; Sanni et al., 2013); the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which is used to predict behaviors, attitudes and intentions (Ajzen, 1991, 2002; Zamani-Miandashti et al., 2013); the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), that explains and predicts the level acceptance of a specific IT (Davis 1989; Persico et al., 2014); and the Information System Success (ISS) model, which investigates the factors influencing user satisfaction with information system (de Lone and McLean, 1992). However, most previous studies were based on the TAM, and investigated the factors which determine the willingness to use IT and actual usage behaviors, in order to predict the levels of user acceptance in relation to a focal technology. There are few studies that simultaneously consider certain features, such as perceived usage and quality in order to investigate users' intention to continue to use a WBSS (Eriksson and Nilsson, 2007). Therefore, this study is based on the TAM and the ISS model, and investigates user satisfaction and intention to continue using WBSS. Based on the results, it then proposes specific recommendations with regard to enhancing continued usage intention, and can thus serve as a reference for firms aiming to implement a WBSS.

The paper is organized in the following manner. The theoretical background and hypotheses section introduces the key constructs of the study and develops the hypotheses. The methodology section explains the procedures used for data collection and validation of the measurement properties of the constructs, and the

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results section presents the results of this empirical study. A discussion of the results, along with the limitations of this work and recommendations for future research, are presented in the discussion section, which is then followed by the conclusion.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

This study aims to investigate factors that influence users' continued usage of a WBSS. First, an examination of how user perceptions of the usage and quality characteristics of WBSS influence their satisfaction and continued usage intention was conducted. Then, the influence of user satisfaction on continued usage intention was investigated in order to better understand what factors influence this intention, and thus be able to provide specific recommendations for enterprises. The research model is illustrated in Fig. 1, and each concept and research hypothesis is elaborated on below.

2.1. Web-based self-services (WBSS)

WBSS refer to when customers carry out certain services for themselves using online interfaces operated by the service provider (Rust and Lemon, 2001). Such service, like automated teller machines (ATMs), automated speech systems, an airport self-check-in kiosks, have the advantages of saving time and cost, being easy to monitor and use, and not requiring direct service employee involvement, all of which can increase service efficiency and lead to lower operating costs (Orel and Kara, 2014). Many such services are now based on the Internet, such as online shopping, package tracking, and ticket booking (Fitzsimmons, 2003), as well as the actual delivery of products, service support, and consumption of products and services (Liljander et al., 2006; Elliott et al., 2012; Oyedele and Simpson, 2007).

2.2. Web quality

de Lone and McLean (1992) posited the Information System Success (ISS) Model, which proposes that information quality and system quality can affect the actual usage behaviors and level of user satisfaction that exist in relation to an information system. In 2003, de Lone and McLean revised the ISS Model by including service quality, a feature that was first proposed by Pitt et al.

(1995), and introducing the concept of net benefits, instead of individual and organizational impacts. In this revised ISS Model, information quality, system quality and service quality can all influence the users' intention to use an information system, and thus their satisfaction with it. Whilst the use of an information system will impact user satisfaction and net benefits, user satisfaction will then impact the intention to use the system again. Finally, when the net benefits increase, both user satisfaction and the intention to use the system will increase.

The ISS model has now been widely applied by many scholars. For example, Seddon and Kiew (1996) conducted a study on information quality and system quality to measure user satisfaction with an accounting information system, while de Lone and McLean (2004) applied the revised ISS Model to an e-commerce context, and examined the critical success factors of e-commerce websites. Kulkarni et al. (2006) and Wu and Wang (2006) applied the ISS model to assess the success of knowledge management systems. In recent years, many scholars have applied the ISS model to websites, and found that the information quality, system quality and service quality of a website are not only factors that affect user satisfaction, but can also be used as part of an index to measure the success of a website (Garrity et al., 2005; Ong et al., 2009). Lee and Yu (2012) used the revised ISS model to measure the project management information system success. Zheng et al. (2013) integrated IS post-adoption research and the ISS model, and proposed a research framework to investigate the continued intention of virtual community users from a quality perspective.

2.3. Technology acceptance model (TAM)

Davis (1989), based on attitude theory along with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), developed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). TAM aims to provide a general explanation of the determinants of technology acceptance that is able to explain user behavior across a broad range of end user information technologies. TAM posits that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are two antecedents of the behavioral intention to use a technology, which then affects actual use behavior. Perceived usefulness refers to the users' belief that using a system will allow them to enhance the level of work performance. While perceived ease of use refers to the users' belief that using a system will not involve any significant efforts or frustrations.

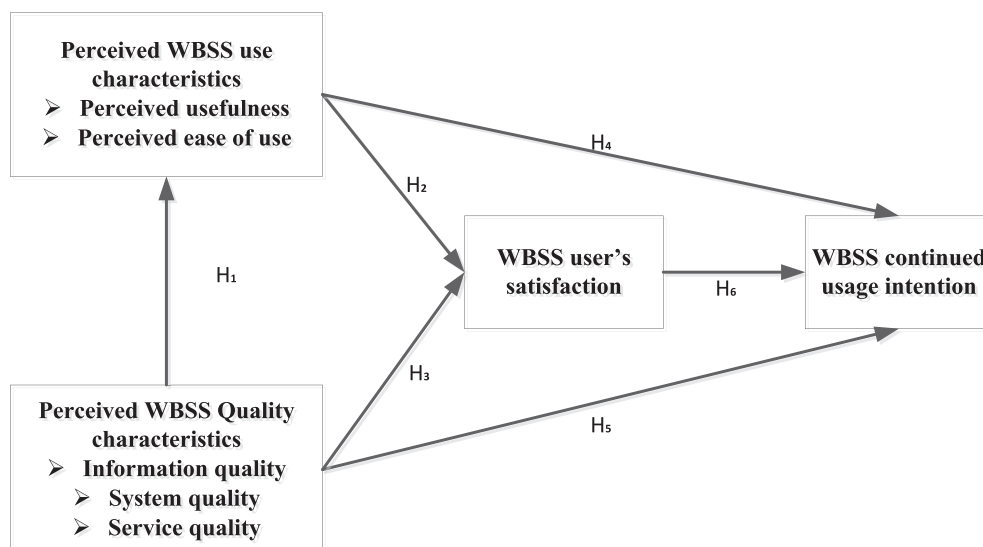


Fig. 1. Research model and hypotheses.

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