Full Length Article

Factors influencing continuance intention to use social network sites: The Facebook case

CrossMark

Samar Mouakket

College of Business Administration, Department of Management Information Systems, University of Sharjah, P.O. Box 27272, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

ABSTRACT

Social networking sites (SNS) have become one of the most popular means of online social interaction. However, few studies have examined SNS from the context of post-adoption. This study focuses on continuance usage intention toward Facebook, a popular SNS, among university students in the United Arab Emirates. We have extended the expectation–confirmation model by investigating the influence of enjoyment and subjective norms as critical factors that directly influence continuance usage intention, and added habit as a mediator between satisfaction and continuance intention. We used structural equation modeling to validate the proposed model and hypotheses. We find that perceived usefulness, satisfaction, habit, enjoyment, and subjective norms explain 54.8% of the variance in continuance intention. Furthermore, our study shows that the effect of satisfaction on continuance intention is both direct and mediated by habit. Thus, practitioners should focus on all of these factors to encourage continuance usage intention in their site's users.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Social networking sites (SNS) allow individuals to create a profile to share photographs, personal information, and join groups of friends (Hew, 2011). They have become one of the most popular means of online social interaction and emotion sharing (Hoadley, Xu, Lee, & Rosson, 2010; Rosen & Kluemper, 2008); and sites consider users' continued use of their sites essential for their long-term success (Ko, 2013; Lankton, Vance Wilson, & Mao, 2010). Yet, despite the growing need to understand users' intention to continue using a particular SNS at a more profound level, research in this area remains understudied. Our review of prior studies reveals that few studies examine SNS use from the context of post-adoption (Chang & Zhu, 2012; Kim, 2011; Lin & Lu, 2011), with even less research in the context of the Arab World (Al-Debei, Al-Lozi, & Papazafeiropoulou, 2013), and none to our knowledge in the Gulf region.

To fill this research gap, we develop a research framework based on the expectation–confirmation model (ECM, Bhattacherjee, 2001) to investigate intention to continue using SNS in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). ECM focuses mainly on individuals' psychological motivations after their initial use of an information system (IS), and is thus considered one of the most well-known frameworks to explain users' post-adoption

expectations of information systems (Kang, Hong, & Lee, 2009; Yoon & Rolland, 2015). The ECM has been widely used to investigate users' attitude toward IS in a post-adoption environment, such as mobile data services (Kim, 2010), online shopping (Al-maghrabi, Dennis, & Halliday, 2011), web 2.0 usage (Chen, Yen, & Hwang, 2012), e-learning (Lee, 2010), and electronic textbooks (Stone & Baker-Eveleth, 2013). However, limited research has applied the ECM within the SNS context (Kang et al., 2009; Kim, 2011; Yin, Cheng, & Zhu, 2011; Yoon & Rolland, 2015). Thus, we contribute a theoretical extension of the ECM's use to empirically examine the influence of hedonic factors of SNS represented by enjoyment and the influence of social factors represented by subjective norms on users' post-adoption continuance intention toward SNS in the UAE. In addition, we also investigate the role of habit as a mediator between satisfaction and continuance intention.

We extend the ECM with these particular constructs for a number of reasons. First, we have identified enjoyment as an important factor influencing users' continuance intention. The ECM focuses on the utilitarian values of IS, represented by perceived usefulness (PU). In this study, we propose to extend the ECM by considering the hedonic values of SNS, represented by enjoyment, since SNS are considered hedonic IS as users are expected to enjoy using them (Ernst, Pfeiffer, & Rothlauf, 2013; Rosen & Sherman, 2006). Enjoyment is considered an intrinsic motivation that reflects the pleasure and delight related to the use of an IS because it depends directly on system–user interaction (Krasnova, Kolesnikova, & Guenther, 2009). Thus, we postulate that any model that attempts

E-mail address: samar@sharjah.ac.ae

to investigate the use of SNS should include the construct of enjoyment as an influential factor motivating users to continue using SNS.

Second, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) postulates that an individual behavioral intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control (Ajzen, 1991). However, although TPB has been applied to investigate users' intention to use IS, limited studies have applied the theory to investigate continuance use of IS (Lee, 2010), particularly to examine the role of subjective norms within the context of SNS (Al-Debei et al., 2013). Subjective norms are individuals' attitudes toward performing a specific action based on the recommendations of people important to them (Ajzen, 1991), which suggests that individuals must be motivated by important people to adopt their action. Within the SNS context, few studies have examined the influence of this construct on continuance intention (Kim, 2011; Ku, Chen, & Zhang, 2013). Explaining the extent of this relationship requires further research, which we attempt to address in this study.

Finally, we have considered habit as a mediator between satisfaction and continuance intention. Prior IS research has examined the role of habit as a moderator between continuance intention and continuance use (Kang et al., 2009) and has a direct effect on continuance intention (Barnes & Böhringer, 2011). However, using SNS is a complex process which also requires more research into the role of the mediating relationship (Huang, Hsieh, & Wuc, 2014). But to the best of our knowledge, no prior research has examined the role of habit as a mediator within the SNS context. Thus we focus on the role of habit as a mediator between satisfaction and continuance intention to use Facebook in this study, which will provide researchers with a platform to further examine the mediating role of habit within this setting.

Although there are many different SNS supporting a wide range of interests and practices, Facebook is considered one of the most popular SNS among undergraduate university students (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011; Hargittai, 2007; Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009; Selwyn, 2009; Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javedc, 2014). Our study empirically examines continuance intention among university students in the UAE toward Facebook. We believe that our study's findings have significant implications for SNS developers and managers, since the survival and the success of an SNS depends primarily on users' continuance usage and participation in different parts of the world. We hope that our findings help SNS developers and managers who are searching for strategies to encourage users to continue using SNS in general, and Facebook in particular.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we present the conceptual model and the research hypotheses. Next, we describe the research methodology in Section 3, followed by an analysis of the findings in Section 4. In Section 5 we discuss our results and we conclude in Section 6 with the theoretical and practical implications, and the limitations and areas for future research.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

This study examines the influence of critical constructs on continuance usage intention of SNS. The proposed research model of this study incorporates all of the constructs and relationships of the ECM and also identifies the following additional constructs as key antecedents of continuance usage intention: habit, subjective norms, and enjoyment. Fig. 1 presents the theoretical framework.

2.1. The expectation–confirmation model

The expectation–confirmation model (Bhattacherjee, 2001) is based on integrating the technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989) with the expectation–confirmation theory (Oliver, 1980) to understand users' intention to continue using an IS. This model hypothesizes that a user's level of satisfaction with and the level of perceived usefulness of a technology determines continuance intention. In turn, a user's level of satisfaction with the technology is determined by the extent of the user's confirmed expectations and perceived usefulness. In addition, a user's confirmed expectations are postulated to influence perceived usefulness.

Numerous studies have applied the ECM to investigate IS continuance intention in different contexts. Barnes and Böhringer (2011) find that perceived usefulness, satisfaction, and habit influence continuance intention in microblogging services. Kim (2010) integrates the ECM with the theory of planned behavior to predict a user's continuance behavior toward mobile data service (MDS) and finds that user satisfaction, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, perceived fee, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence continuance intention. Wen, Prybutok, and Xu's (2011) study reveals that perceived usefulness, satisfaction, and enjoyment affect online repurchase intention. Lee and Kwon (2011) find that perceived usefulness, satisfaction, familiarity, and intimacy determine consumers' continuance intention toward web-based services. Thong, Hong, and Tam (2006) find that continuance intention toward e-government services is determined by perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, perceived ease of use, and satisfaction. Stone and Baker-Eveleth (2013) apply the ECM to investigate electronic textbook users' continuance intention, and find that both satisfaction and perceived usefulness influence electronic textbook continuance usage intention.

Within the context of SNS, few studies have applied the ECM to investigate user continuance intention toward this technology (Kang et al., 2009; Kim, 2011). This study adds to the body of knowledge on SNS by examining whether the relationships proposed in the ECM apply to the use of Facebook in the UAE. Hence, we proposed the following:

H1. Confirmation has a positive influence on satisfaction toward Facebook.

H2. Confirmation has a positive influence on perceived usefulness toward Facebook.

H3. Perceived usefulness has a positive influence on satisfaction toward Facebook.

H4. Perceived usefulness has a positive influence on continuance intention toward Facebook.

H5. Satisfaction has a positive influence on continuance intention toward Facebook.

2.2. Subjective norms

Subjective norms (SN) refer to "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform a behavior" (Ajzen, 1991). They reflect how the perceptions of important people, such as family and friends, affect an individual. This construct assumes that an individual is inclined to perform certain behaviors to gain acceptance within his/her circle of influence (Al-Debei et al., 2013). Subjective norms are determined by interpersonal influence, including the impact of word-of-mouth from friends and colleagues, and external environmental influences including mass media reports and experienced people (Bhattacherjee, 2000). For example, Roca, Chiu, and Martinez (2006) examine the influence