



Predicting behavioral intention of mobile Internet usage



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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research is to analyze an innovative model to explain behavioral intention to use mobile Internet, using as antecedents the operating system of smart phones, self-image of respondents and price value, taking into account gender as a moderator variable. The partial least squares approach was applied to test the research model. All the research hypotheses have been contrasted, and the obtained results support the proposed model. Males using iPhone have the greatest behavioral intention of using mobile Internet.

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1. Introduction

Mobile Internet (MI) usage intensity has grown substantially over the past years. The number of mobile subscriptions set to surpass 7 billion and reach the whole world population in 2014. The explosion of MI business comes together with the development from the old mobile phones into the current smart phones. This is a combination of personal device assistants and mobile phones that use advanced operating systems and permit users to install new applications, be constantly connected to the Internet, and provide multifarious functionalities of both (Norazah Mohd, 2013). According to a report from the specialized consultant Analysis Mason, there are 1700 million of smart phones around the world in 2014, which means an annual growth of 32%. Furthermore, the number of smart phone connections is set to grow by 136% in the next 5 years to reach 3.9 billion connections worldwide in 2018 (de Renesse, 2014). However, nowadays a small minority of users generates a disproportionate share of the total data volume. These are some of the reasons that justify the huge importance of studying factors, which influence consumer behavior of mobile Internet users (Gerpott and Thomas, 2014).

In response to the figures, the sale of smartphones is one of the big businesses of the early twenty-first century. It is estimated that nearly a billion smartphones were sold only in 2013 (Gartner, 2014). Despite this, there is a large market concentration; the first five companies occupy 60% of the total market volume. For example, the market shares of Samsung, Apple, Huawei, Lenovo and LG were 31.1%, 15.3%, 4.9%, 4.8% and 4.5% respectively, in 2013 (IDC, 2014). One of the key elements of smart phones is software, beyond hardware provided by the aforementioned companies. The operating system (OS) is the true heart of smart phones (Gerpott et al., 2013b). And it is precisely in the operating systems where there is a tremendous market concentration, there is an absolute leader: Google Android, with about 80% of market share in 2013, followed by IOS of Apple, with a somewhat higher than the 15% (Gartner, 2014). Both cover about 95% of the current market. It is interesting to research this problem from the point of view of information systems and marketing.

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The aim of this research is to analyze an innovative model to explain behavioral intention to use MI, taking into account the operating system of smart phones, self-image of respondents and price-value, and using gender as a moderator variable. OS has been controlled in this research, but not smart phone device. Some studies found slight differences in the perceptions of operating system-related characteristics, such as complexity and comfortableness, in general, Apple system was perceived better and more user-friendly than Android (Gafni and Geri, 2013). Other authors (Tilson et al., 2010) proposed three new directions for information system (IS) research with regard to digital infrastructures. One of these research lines are: “paradoxes of change and control as salient IS phenomena,” and one sub-line inside this is: “considering individuals appealing in patterns of use through several devices and services while adapting to vigorously changing service ecologies”. This research digs into individual pattern of use of mobile Internet, taking into account brand image of one of the most valued devices of Apple, the iPhone. More specifically, this work brings together several lines of research. The first of them is framed on technology of acceptance models, from the point of view of the consumer market, namely UTAUT2 (Venkatesh et al., 2012), which proposes the relationship between intention to use, image and price/value. There are previous articles dealing with MI use from UTAUT2 perspective (Ramirez-Correa et al., 2014; Venkatesh et al., 2012). As a second research line, this study falls between those jobs that are looking for differences between users of different OS (Gerpott et al., 2013a; Laugesen and Yuan, 2010), not so much because of the influence of the OS itself but as the dissimilarities in the segments of consumers of diverse OS types.

This work makes several contributions with regard to the previous literature. Firstly, it deals with the relationship between image and price/value on intention to use MI. Although they are constructs and relationships that appear in UTAUT2, are still scantily studied because of the novelty of the proposed model (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Secondly, the majority of works that analyze the antecedents of intention to use, employ moderating variables such as age, gender, experience as a user (Ramirez-Correa et al., 2010; Venkatesh et al., 2012), or a socio-demographic variable (Peral et al., 2014). There is a lack of studies that use characteristics of the analyzed products as variables in these models. Thirdly, to distinguish between Android and IOS and analyze the different behaviors of their users has relevant implications from a marketing viewpoint. The differences in the perceptions of image or price-value among consumers of both OS have a significant impact from the point of view of brand management (Bjelland et al.; Jacques, 2013; Laugesen and Yuan, 2010). Finally, the Latin American context (Chile) is a remarkable contribution of this study, because the vast majority of contributions about this topic are analyzed with samples collected in Europe, Asia or US (Gerpott and Thomas, 2014).

This paper is structured as follows. In the first place makes a review of the literature, which serves as a base for the formulation of hypotheses. Secondly, we present the methodology used in this study. In third place, we show the main results obtained. We finish by offering the foremost findings, as well as the potential limitations and future directions for research.

2. Conceptual framework

In this section, the main theoretical developments and hypotheses' formulation of this study are exposed. In addition, the proposed model is justified and developed.

2.1. Smartphones: iPhone vs Android

In the recent past the number of consumers owning sophisticated mobile handheld devices, so-called smart phones, has rapidly increased (Gerpott et al., 2013a). Proof of this is the incredible volume of sales generated. According to a market study published by a consulting firm, near the million units were sold around the world during 2013, which means an increase of 42.3% compared to last year's sales (Gartner, 2014). The leaders of the smart phone market are Samsung and Apple, with a market share of 31% and 15.6% respectively, in 2013 (Gartner, 2014). However, one of the most important features of a smart phone is its operating system (OS), because it determines many aspects and features of their performance (Gerpott et al., 2013a). Currently, the operating systems Android and IOS are the most widespread, with market shares of 78.4% and 15.6% respectively, in 2013 (Gartner, 2014). The Android OS is the result of Open Handset Alliance led by Google since 2008 and is present in a multitude of smart phone brands, including the world leader: Samsung. At the same time, IOS is an exclusive OS of the iPhone marketed by Apple.

The iPhone cannot be simply defined as a Smartphone. It has been qualified as “Jesus Phone” or “the holy grail of all gadgets” (Campbell and La Pastina, 2010), time magazine described it as the invention of the year (Grossman, 2007); and according to Apple figures, nearly 1.4 million devices were sold only in USA in the first 6 months since its launching. Apple introduced it into the market in 2007 and since then they have created several generations of the iPhone: 3, 3G, 3GS, 4, 4S, 5, 5C, 5S, 6, and 6Plus. According to Forbes magazine, 500 million iPhone devices have been sold throughout the world in March 2014 (Rogowsky, 2014). Apple targets a Premium segment of market (Jacques, 2013), and stresses the capabilities of iPhone and related third party applications rather than focusing on the technology itself). In addition, Apple has developed a brand image which has created an extremely loyal customer base.

On the other hand, Android comes from Open Handset Alliance created and led by Google since 2008. Android is a royalty-free, open-source OS, and Google was already the leader in the Internet with its search engine. However, with the expected growth of portable devices, Google wanted to secure their position of privilege. Android was created to increase the traffic of Google mobile, and to earn incomes through advertising. The OS promoted by Google was able to convince

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