

Factors Affecting Continued Use of Social Media

Eleanor T. Loiacono¹ and Scott McCoy²

¹ Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Worcester, USA
eloiacon@wpi.edu

² Mason School of Business, College of William and Mary, 23187
Williamsburg, USA
Scott.mccoy@mason.wm.edu

Abstract. This research paper focuses on factors which affect the continued use of social media technology. Using the Technology Acceptance Model, the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior, a research model was constructed which focused on a set of core constructs, including Perceived Usefulness, Social Norms, Self-Efficacy, and Attitudes and their overall impact on users Continuous Intent to Use social media technologies. Results will be shared with conference participants.

Keywords: Theory of planned behavior, Social media technologies.

1 Introduction

Much research in the last three decades has investigated the acceptance and use of information technology (IT). However, only a limited number of studies have focused on the acceptance of social media technology.

With the advent of the Internet and the proliferation of social media, users now have a choice of technologies that not only can increase productivity at work but can also impact their social lives. SMTs, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and others, have transformed the way users communicate with each other on both a personal and professional level.

2 Literature Review

Since research on the acceptance of technology is central to the field of IS, it is unfortunate that most of the work in the area has focused on productivity-based IS. Most research has neglected the entertaining (van der Heijden 2004) and social technologies that have grown dramatically since the Internet was first privately operated.

Because this research focuses on a unique set of factors and their impact on continued use of SMTs, we determined that the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior were more appropriate theoretical frameworks from which to base our work.

2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action

The original Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a social psychology model concerned with the determinants of consciously intended behaviors (Fishbein et al. 1975a).

According to the TRA (Figure 1), a person's actual behavior is influenced by his or her behavioral intentions (BI), and BI is jointly determined by the person's attitude and subjective norm (SN). Attitude is, in turn, determined by the person's beliefs and evaluations, while SN is determined by normative beliefs and motivations to comply.

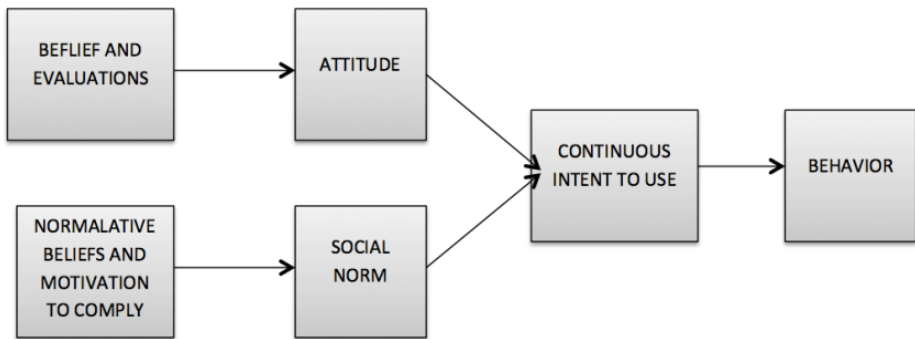


Fig. 1. Theory of Reasoned Action

Attitude is concerned with a person's feelings about performing a behavior. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975a), "an attitude represents a person's general feeling of favorableness or unfavorableness toward some stimulus object" (p. 216). Further, "as a person forms beliefs about an object, he automatically and simultaneously acquires an attitude toward that object" (Fishbein et al. 1975a, p. 216). Positive attitudes lead to intentions to perform the behavior, while negative attitudes lead to intentions not to perform the behavior.

Subjective norm refers to a "person's perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behavior in question" (Fishbein et al. 1975a, p. 302). One can think of SN as peer pressure.

2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991; Ajzen 2002; Ajzen et al. 1980) is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein et al. 1975a) with the central factor in both models being the individual's intention to perform a behavior. TPB adds a third antecedent, which refers to the "degree of perceived behavioral control" (Ajzen et al. 1986, p. 132). This antecedent refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of

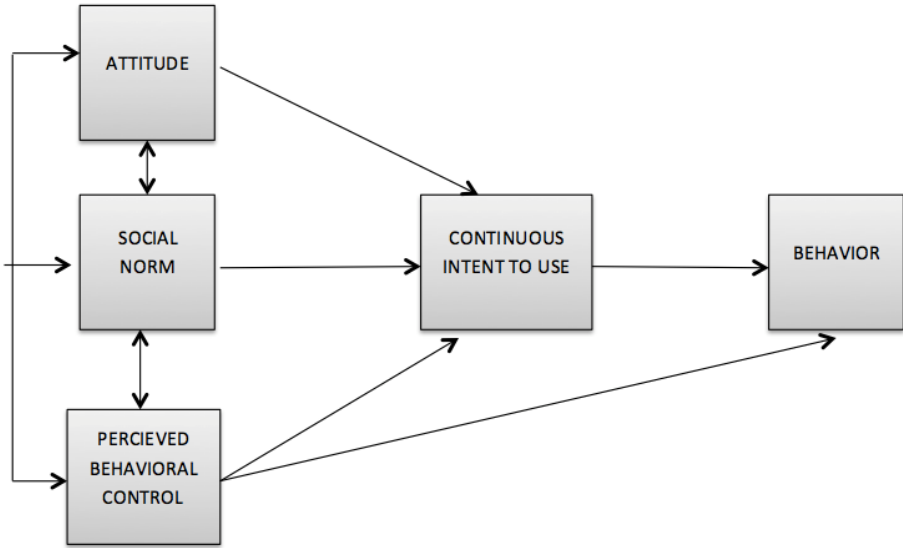


Fig. 2. Theory of Planned Behavior

performing the behavior. As can be seen in Figure 2, these three antecedents affect intentions, which in turn lead to actual behavior.

The TPB assumes that PBC has “motivational implications for intentions” (Ajzen et al. 1986, p. 134). There is then an “association between perceived behavioral control and intention that is not mediated by attitude and subjective norm” (Ajzen et al. 1986, p. 134). The arrow linking perceived behavioral control to intention represents this expectation.

3 Model Development and Hypotheses.

Based on the literature review above, we now turn to building our research model. Figure 3 details this model.

3.1 Continued Intentions

An important indicator of behavior is intention. However, intentions is more appropriate to focus on if the technology is already in use. If the technology use is a pleasant experience then continued use is expected, but if it is unpleasant, continued use is not expected.

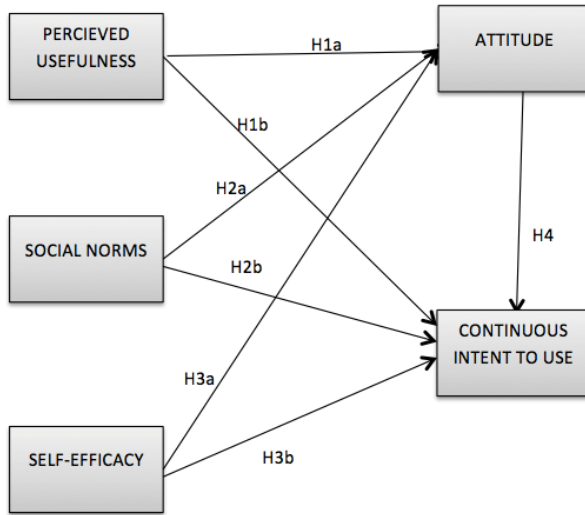


Fig. 3. Research Model

3.2 Beliefs (Perceived Usefulness)

According to the TRA and TPB, key influencers of attitudes are beliefs. Their significance is quite applicable to the IS literature as well (Davis 1989). Perceived usefulness (PU), in particular, is one belief that has been shown to have a significant impact on intention (Davis 1989). It has been defined as “the prospective user’s subjective probability that using a specific application system will increase his or her job performance within an organizational context” (Davis et al. 1989, p. 985). As detailed in the model, the beliefs about the usefulness of the SMT are thought to affect attitudes. More formally stated,

- H1a. The more useful a user finds a SMT the more positive their attitudes towards the SMT will be.
- H1b. The more useful a user finds a SMT the more positive their intention to continue using the SMT will be.

3.3 Subjective Norm

Similarly, SNs are thought to impact attitudes and intention. In the context of SMT, SN reference groups would be both on- and off-line friends who use or plan to use the technology. As the reference group pressures the user to use the SMTs, the user’s attitudes toward the technology become more positive and he or she is more likely to continue to use the technology. More formally stated:

- H2a: There is a direct and positive link between subjective norm and attitudes.
- H2b: There is a direct and positive link between subjective norm and continued use of the SMTs.

3.4 Perceived Behavioral Control (Self-Efficacy)

In the context of our research, PBC manifests itself as Self-Efficacy (SE) (Compeau et al. 1995). If a person feels he or she has the ability to use SMTs, then his or her attitudes toward the technology and overall intentions to use it will be affected. . More formally stated:

- H3a: As a user's feelings about his or her ability to use SMTs increases so does his or her attitude towards using it.
- H3b: As a user's feelings about his or her ability to use SMTs increases so does his or her intentions to continue to use it.

3.5 Attitude

In terms of attitudes towards a behavior, they have a direct impact on one's intentions to behave in a certain way. A positive attitude towards a behavior is likely to result in a person performing that behavior. Thus,

- H4. The higher a user's attitude towards an SMT, the more likely he or she will be to intend to continue to use it.

4 Research Methodology

In order to understand the impact of the model factors, a research model and corresponding survey were developed based on a comprehensive literature review (Moore et al. 1991; Straub 1989) and data collected from actual SMT users.

4.1 Data Collection and Current Status

Survey items, adopted from existing measures, were collected and pre-tested with a small set of subjects. The survey was adjusted and is currently being administered to a larger set of SMT users.

5 Planned Analysis and Expected Results

The data will be analyzed in two stages. First, the data will be used to evaluate the measurement model. Next, the structural model will be evaluated. Using PLS we will be able to test the significance of each hypothesis. We expect to find a significant result in each of our predicted relationships, and those results will be shared with conference participants.

References

1. Ajzen, I.: The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50(2), 179–211 (1991)
2. Ajzen, I.: Perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, locus of control, and the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* (32), 665–683 (2002)
3. Ajzen, I., Fishbein, M.: *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*, Englewood Cliffs (1980)
4. Ajzen, I., Madden, T.J.: Prediction of goal directed behavior: Attitudes, intentions, and perceived behavioral control. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (22), 453–474 (1986)
5. Compeau, D., Higgins, C.: Computer Self-Efficacy: Development of a Measure and Initial Test. *MIS Quarterly* 19(2), 189–211 (1995)
6. Davis, F., Bagozzi, R.P., Warshaw, P.R.: User Acceptance of Computer Technology: A Comparison of Two Theoretical Models. *Management Science* 35(8), 982–1003 (1989)
7. Davis, F.D.: Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology. *MIS Quarterly* 13(3), 319–339 (1989)
8. Fishbein, M., Ajzen, I.: *Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Addison-Wesley, Reading (1975)
9. Moore, G.C., Benbasat, I.: Development of an instrument to measure the perceptions of adopting an information technology innovation. *Information Systems Research* 2(3), 173–191 (1991)
10. Straub, D.W.: Validating Instruments in MIS Research. *MIS Quarterly* 13(2), 147–169 (1989)
11. van der Heijden, H.: User Acceptance of Hedonic Information Systems. *MIS Quarterly* 28(4), 695–704 (2004)

Appendix 1: Table of Hypotheses

H1: Usefulness Hypotheses

- H1a. The more useful a user finds a SMT the more positive their attitudes towards the SMT will be.
- H1b. The more useful a user finds a SMT the more positive their intention to continue using the SMT will be.

H2: Subjective Norm Hypotheses

- H2a: There is a direct and positive link between subjective norm and attitudes.
- H2b: There is a direct and positive link between subjective norm and continued use of the SMTs.

H3: Self-Efficacy Hypotheses

- H3a: As a user's feelings about his or her ability to use SMTs increases so does his or her attitude towards using it.
- H3b: As a user's feelings about his or her ability to use SMTs increases so does his or her intentions to continue to use it.

H4: Attitude Hypothesis

- H4. The higher a user's attitude towards an SMT, the more likely he or she will be to intend to continue to use it.

Appendix 2: Survey Items

Self-Efficacy:

I could use this social network:

- If there was no one around to tell me what to do as I go.
- If I could call someone for help if I got stuck.
- If I had a lot of time to complete my task for which I am using this social network.
- If I had just this social network's built-in help features for assistance.

Social Norms:

- People who influence my behavior think that I should use this social network.
- People who are important to me think that I should use this social network.

Intention to Continue Usage:

- My intentions are to continue using this social networking site rather than using an alternative social networking site.
- If I could, I would like to discontinue my use of this social networking site.
- I intend to continue using this social networking site.

Attitude towards Using:

- Using this social networking site is a good idea.
- This social networking site makes my life more interesting.
- Using this social networking site is fun.
- I like using this social networking site.

Perceived Usefulness:

- Using this online social network improves my ability to manage my social connections.
- Using this online social network increases my productivity in managing my social connections.
- Using this online social network enhances my effectiveness in managing my social connections.
- Overall, this online social network is useful in managing my social connections.