Understanding Social Capital on Mobile SNS- An IS Success Model Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The social capital embedded within the social network relationships among users may facilitate their continued usage of mobile SNS. However, how to develop social capital remains a question. In this article, the authors incorporated three factors of system quality, information quality, and service quality from the information systems (IS) success model to examine their effects on social capital in mobile SNS. The results indicate that these three factors have significant effects on social capital, which includes structural capital, relational capital, and cognitive capital. The results imply that service providers need to improve users’ technological perceptions in order to develop social capital and facilitate their continuance of mobile SNS.

KEYWORDS

IS Success Model, Mobile SNS, Relational Capital, Social Capital

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INTRODUCTION

The application of the fourth generation (4G) technologies has triggered mobile internet development. According to a recent report, the number of mobile internet users in China has exceeded 753 million, accounting for 97.5% of its internet population (CNNIC, 2018). Faced with the great market, service providers have developed a variety of mobile services, such as mobile instant messaging, mobile social networking services (SNS), mobile games, and mobile payment. They expect users to widely adopt and use these services. Then they can make profits and achieve success. Nevertheless, acquiring users and facilitating their adoption is just the initial step for service providers. They also need to retain users and facilitate their post-adoptions. Otherwise, users may discontinue their usage, which leads to service providers’ failure.

As an emerging service, mobile SNS enable users to interact with their peers and friends at anytime from anywhere. This greatly improves users’ experience and facilitates their usage. At the same time, multiple mobile SNS such as Facebook, LinkedIn, WeChat, QQ Zone, and Sina Weibo exist in the market and there is intense competition among them. They try to expand the user base and achieve competitive advantage. For users, the frequent interactions may strengthen the social relationship networks among them and develop social capital, which reflects the intangible resources embedded within the network (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). For example, they may build close social interaction ties with their peers and friends. They may also build trust in other members and develop identification with the community. In addition, they may form a shared vision and language through frequent interactions. These aspects related to social capital may facilitate users’ continuance.

Previous research has examined SNS user behaviour from multiple perspectives, such as privacy concern (Sun, Wang, Shen and Zhang, 2015; Zlatolas, Welzer, Hericko and Holbl, 2015), the motivational theory (Tang, Zhao and Liu, 2016), and social cognitive theory (Dhir, Kaur and Rajala, 2018). As noted earlier, the social capital embedded within the social networking may facilitate an individual user’s behaviour. Thus, it is necessary to examine mobile SNS continuance from the perspective of social capital, which includes structural capital, relational capital and cognitive capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). In addition, we drew on three factors of system quality, information quality and service quality from the information systems (IS) success model to identify their effects on social capital. Extant research has focused on the effect of social capital on user behaviour, such as information sharing (Liu, Cheung and Lee, 2016b), and word-of-mouth (Wang, Yeh, Chen and Tsydypov, 2016), and has seldom examined the determinants of social capital. In other words, how to develop social capital remains a question. We propose that mobile SNS platform quality, which includes system quality, information quality and service quality, may affect social capital development. The results improve our understanding of social capital and provide guidelines for service providers to facilitate social capital development.

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