Role of Perceived Value in Acceptance of “Bring Your Own Device” Policy

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ABSTRACT

IT consumerization refers to the phenomenon of using personal devices and applications for work-related tasks. Considered as a major wave of employee-driven innovation, many organizations have adopted IT consumerization to reap its benefits. Bring-your-own-device (BYOD) is a major form of IT consumerization. This study examines the perceptions of BYOD among business students and professionals. Utilizing a perceived value approach, a survey was designed to examine how the benefits and sacrifices of BYOD influence its perceived value. Through survey data collected from 217 business students and 200 full time working professionals, the study finds that job flexibility control, technology empowerment, and enjoyment are positively related to the perceived value of BYOD.

KEYWORDS

BYOD, IT Consumerization, Job Flexibility Control, Perceived Value, Privacy and Security Risk, Technology Empowerment, Work-Life Conflict

1. INTRODUCTION

IT consumerization is defined as the use of personal devices (iPhone, iPad, Microsoft Surface) and applications (Dropbox, Skype) to complete work-related tasks in the workplace (Harris, Ives, & Junglas, 2012). Considered as the second wave of an employee-driven innovation with the first wave being the invasion of personal computers in the mainframe world (Harris et al., 2012), it advocates abandoning enterprise IT and using consumer technologies that promise greater freedom and more fun (Murdoch, Harris, & Devore, 2010). Bring your own devices, abbreviated as “BYOD”, is one form of IT consumerization. Under BYOD, employees bring their personal smartphones and mobile devices and readily use the devices to accomplish workplace tasks. According to a 2014 survey conducted by Dell and Intel, more than half of the employees were authorized to use personal devices at work. For companies without a BYOD policy, 43% of employees have used their personal devices without their employers’ knowledge (Dell and Intel, 2014). A recent report shows that although BYOD has plateaued over the past two years, it has risen significantly in one group of the workforce – high performing client-interacting employees (McConnell, 2016).
Many factors contribute to this BYOD phenomenon: young tech-savvy millennials moving into the global workforce, mobile personal devices growing more accessible, affordable, and easy-to-use, and social networking applications, such as LinkedIn and Twitter, becoming indispensable business tools (TrendMicro, 2011). BYOD reveals the emergence of a bottom-up innovation process. Instead of waiting for organizations to provide the technologies, employees who are technologically innovative have taken the initiative to acquire and use IT systems that they believe would increase their efficiency and productivity. Organizations have exhibited mixed feelings towards this phenomenon. Many organizations realize that they could reap benefits such as innovation, productivity and employee satisfaction in addition to cost savings for the IT departments (Harris et al., 2012). Therefore, many organizations have shown an interest in and tolerance for employees using their own mobile devices at work. In fact, 59% of the IT departments already provide full or partial support for a BYOD policy (Cesare, 2011). At the same time, BYOD presents many challenges. Organizations need to understand the risk environment, reassess employee liability and accountability, and adopt a proactive IT security strategy to manage IT infrastructure and data in the new business environment (Armando, Costa, Verderame, & Merlo, 2014; French, Guo, & Shim, 2014).

Research also denoted several motivations for employees to adopt IT consumerization such as productivity, flexibility, and ease of use (Gartner, 2012). Additional motives include better communication, freedom of choice and higher IT competence (Köffer, Ortbach, & Niehaves, 2014). However, there are downsides associated with BYOD as well. When employees use their own devices for work, they are often reachable outside regular work hours, leading to heavier workloads and increased stress levels (Dell and Intel, 2011).

To date, empirical research on IT consumerization, especially on BYOD from an employee’s perspective, is limited. Researchers have explored how IT consumerization could affect job performance (Köffer, Junglas, Chiperi, & Niehaves, 2014), stress levels (Ortbach, Köffer, Müller, & Niehaves, 2013), and work-family conflict (Schalow, Winkler, Repschläger, & Zarnekow, 2013). To provide much needed empirical analysis of the BYOD phenomenon, this study employs a value-based approach to understand individuals’ perceptions about BYOD.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The next section examines relevant research on the BYOD phenomenon. This is followed by a hypotheses development section, the corresponding methodology, and results of hypotheses testing. The paper then concludes with implications of the findings.

2. PREVIOUS LITERATURE ON BYOD

In the past, organizations have strategically adopted and implemented IT systems, which then diffuse among employees to improve organizations’ performance. Today, many employees can choose to introduce their personally preferred mobile devices, applications, and cloud services into work and use them for work-related purposes (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2015). Employees adopt BYOD for a diverse array of reasons. Some introduce their own IT devices to be more efficient and productive, and some do so because they are dissatisfied with their company’s equipment policy (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2015), and others merely desire the convenience of using their own devices (Sylvia, 2013).

Previous research has shown that BYOD can impact professionals’ job performance. For example, a recent study shows that BYOD can potentially enable better communication, improve professionals’ IT competence, and enhance self-responsibility (Köffer et al., 2014). BYOD is often associated with more freedom of choice for employees since they make their own IT decisions and provide their own technical support (Murdoch et al., 2010). The autonomy offered by BYOD is posited to influence work performance positively (Niehaves, Köffer, & Ortbach, 2013). A 2013 survey conducted by Cisco in six countries reported a gain of an average 37 minutes of productive time per week for BYOD employees (Loucks, Medcalf, Buckalew, & Faria, 2013).
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