**Research Note**

**Exploring Cross-Cultural Value Structures with Smartphones**

_**Dong-Hee Shin, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea**_

_Hyungseung Choo, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea_

**ABSTRACT**

Smartphone users in the U.S. and Korea were cross-surveyed to determine country-specific differences in product value perceptions. Usability factors and aesthetic values were combined using the theory of reasoned action (TRA). The strengths of the model’s relationships are discussed. The models were analyzed cross-nationally to explore differences in the compositions of technology adoption motives in the two countries. Although the results illustrate the importance of both usability and aesthetic values, the two countries show different value preferences as well as intention and adoption patterns. The results of this study suggest practical implications for employing cross-cultural strategies in the global marketing of smartphones as well as theoretical implications for cross-country studies, which are recommended accordingly.

Keywords: Adoption, Cross-Cultural HCI, Moderating Effects, Smartphones, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

**INTRODUCTION**

A smartphone is a mobile phone that offers more advanced computing and connectivity than basic feature phones (Chen, Yen, & Chen, 2009). Sales of smartphones have increased annually since their market introduction in 2009. Moreover, growth in the demand for advanced mobile devices boasting powerful processors, abundant memory, large screens and open operating systems has outpaced the rest of the mobile phone market for several years. Verkasalo et al. (2010) reported that of the 234 million mobile phone subscribers in the U.S., over 45.5 million people have become smartphone owners, making it the fastest growing segment of the mobile phone market. Additionally, the advent of Apple’s iPhone has drastically increased smartphone popularity. Smartphone popularity will continue to drive progressive advancement in the technology.

There is extensive literature on the adoption and use of smartphones, but few studies have explored the motivations for using recent smartphones and the perceived value of the technology from a cross-cultural perspective. The theoretical model in this study incorporates the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the perceived values of aesthetics and usability (Figure 1). The key focus of the present study is...
to investigate user attitudes toward smartphone services in a two-country context in order to investigate value differences that may apply to smartphone services. Given the absence of universal measurements of user experience, motivations, and values that can be applied to different countries, a cross-cultural framework is useful to understand why certain smartphone services are popular in some countries and not in others. Shin (2009) and Kim, Lee, and Lee (2004) have urged researchers to conduct cross-country studies in mobile services to determine how cross-country factors influence the diffusion of mobile communications. The innovative and global nature of smartphones has fostered many visions of comparative understanding among countries, although the research in this area is in its infancy (Walsh, Nurkka, & Walsh, 2010). As smartphone services become increasingly global, a cross-national comparison of their perceived value would aid the industry in developing global markets. Customers universally expect technologies to offer experiences that fulfill both their hedonic and pragmatic needs within their cultural contexts (Baron & Segerstad, 2010). Cross-cultural design ensures that technologies are easy to use and that they provide good user experiences across cultural boundaries. Such comparative study may also be useful in academia because it explores the theoretical implications of studying cross-cultural technology adoption and usage.

We chose to compare the U.S. and South Korea for two reasons: First, both countries have well developed smartphone markets. The two countries are among those with the highest mobile diffusions in the world and are global leaders in the smartphone market, which is dominated by the Apple iPhone and Samsung Galaxy in the U.S. and South Korea, respectively. Second, the countries belong to distinct Western and Asian civilizations, which have been historically shaped by different philosophies and values. For example, Korean culture has long been influenced by Confucianism, while individualism has largely shaped North American culture. Thus there are substantial cultural differences that will affect the relationships of the model employed herein. This study addresses the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: Which factors or values most significantly affect attitudes toward smartphone services
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