The Link between Socialness, User Experience and System Usage: A Theoretically Integrated Model to Measure Information System Success

ABSTRACT

The objective of this dissertation was to create and test a research model that measures Information System success by combining the utilitarian, social and the hedonic or experiential characteristics in the context of customers’ use of electronic commerce systems. The hedonic and social characteristics of Information Systems have become important motivators for system use owing to the interactive nature of contemporary Information Systems. Yet, prior literature on system success in particular has mainly focused on the ‘task based’ or utilitarian benefits of system use, with a dearth of research that links system success to ‘hedonic’ and ‘social’ benefits. This dissertation blends DeLone and McLean’s (1992, 2003, and 2004) traditional ‘utility’ based system success models with the hedonic and social motivations of system use into a theoretically integrated research model that comprehensively predicts the system success.

The two variables of user experience which deals with a user’s emotions, perceptions, attitudes, and thoughts evoked as a result of interactions with a system and socialness which measures the social cues emanating from a system’s interface enabled by the rich media tools; were added to the DeLone and McLean’s framework. The resulting holistic framework measures both the utilitarian and the experiential or ‘hedonic’ characteristics of a system. Thus the research model developed in this dissertation tested the hypotheses that the antecedent variables of e-Commerce system success (i.e., system quality, information quality, and service quality) suggested by DeLone and McLean (1992, 2003,
and 2004), along with the variable of ‘socialness’ have a positive effect on the user’s experience with a system and also that the user’s experience with a system in turn has a positive impact on the system usage.

The model was tested by conducting a survey of 349 e-Commerce users in India using a pretested survey instrument, developed by iteration with electronic commerce research experts using the partial least squares (PLS) analysis technique. The validity of the research is substantiated in that respondents of this survey were found to be comparable to the demographics of internet users in India.

The key findings of this research are that the construct of socialness was found to significantly influence the user’s experiences with the system. In addition, the user’s experience with a system was also found to be a significant determinant of system usage. The contribution of the research model developed in this study is that the work brings together variables from the traditionally separated utilitarian and hedonic schools of thought. The results indicate statistical support for the concept that hedonic, and socialness measures are of import in a user’s continued attraction to electronic commerce web sites, in addition to the traditional design criterion. It is suggested that the practitioner value of the research outcomes described in this dissertation lie in the contributions that are made by describing a more comprehensive framework that serve as a basis for developing systems that more closely meet all of the users’ requirements, and thereby attract the loyalties of the users in the long run.