Context, Gender and Intended Use of Mobile Messaging, Entertainment and Social Media Services

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ABSTRACT

The added value of mobile services is decided by the context in which they are used. In this paper, the authors study how the context-of-use influences the intention to adopt mobile messaging, entertainment and social media services. While doing so, the authors compare the intended use between males and females. The results are based on a large scale survey study among Finnish consumers. According to the findings, the context-of-use matters for mobile entertainment and messaging services, but not for social media services. Fit with social context is only important for social media services, whilst work-related context matters only for messaging services. In general, context-of-use is more decisive for men than women. However, while ubiquitous context-of-use is much more important for males, social and work context are relevant only for females. The results have important implications for service providers on how to develop and implement specific context-aware mobile services.

Keywords: *Adoption, Consumer Survey, Context-of-Use, Gender, Mobile Information Systems, Mobile Services*

INTRODUCTION

Mobile services only add value if they fit the needs and context of consumers (Keen & Mackintosh, 2001). As mobile services are available independently of time and place, the

physical, social and work context of a typical user may be highly diverse. Consequently, service providers are increasingly aiming to develop context-aware, personalized services (Klemettinen 2007; de Reuver & Haaker, 2009). Typical examples are location-based services and, more recently, social networking applications that take advantage of the social context

of users. As a result, scholars have increasingly focused on context-of-use to explain the intention to adopt mobile services (e.g., Amberg et al., 2004; Tamminen et al., 2004, Arnold, 2003).

The relevance of context-of-use strongly depends on the type of mobile service considered. For example, entertainment services may add little value in most work situations, whilst messaging services may be less used in social contexts. In today's market, various types of mobile services are being offered to consumers. For example, entertainment services like mobile TV have received ample attention. Social media services like Facebook and Twitter are increasingly moving to the domain of mobile devices. Messaging services have been well-established with basic SMS, but are on the verge of moving to richer forms of communication such as videoconferencing. The benefits offered by such services are highly diverse (Bouwman et al., 2008).

However, existing studies on context-of-use often focus on one specific type of mobile services instead of comparing different types of services. For example, Van der Heijden et al. (2005) find that perceived usefulness of mobile navigation services depends on the context, as user vignettes portraying good fit between context-of-use and the service are valued higher than those with poor fit. Mallat et al. (2009) find a positive effect of physical and temporal context on intention to use mobile ticketing services. Despite these findings, existing studies hardly contrast how different dimensions of context influence different types of mobile services.

Besides the context-of-use, the intention to adopt a mobile service may vary depending on the groups, communities or lifestyles to which people adhere. Especially gender may influence the likelihood to adopt mobile technologies and services (Suhong, 2008; Lu et al., 2008; Hong et al., 2008); then it is likely that the importance of the context-of-use to adopt a mobile service will differ between males and females. However, while several studies either consider context or gender to explain the intention to use mobile service, extensive literature research did not reveal any studies that combine these effects.

This paper aims to study the effect of context-of-use on the intention to adopt mobile messaging, entertainment and social media services, while exploring the moderating role that gender may have. We do so by analysing the results of a large-scale survey conducted in 2009 among a representative sample of Finnish consumers.

This paper distinguishes three underlying dimensions of context-of-use. Firstly, the ubiquitous context plays an important role. The growing attention for location-based services and more advanced virtual or augmented reality services illustrates the importance of ubiquitous context. The emergence of fixed-mobile convergence solutions like IMS, platforms like Apple's apps platform, and resulting multimodality options increase the scope of contexts in which mobile services may provide added value. Secondly, the social context of the user may also play an important role. Thirdly, context may refer to the work and tasks people want to execute. Carlsson (2006) argues, for instance, that mobile services only add value if they contribute to specific daily routines, which means that the work-related context plays a major role. This view is empirically supported by Bouwman and Van de Wijngaert (2009, 2002).

This paper contributes to theory on mobile service adoption by studying the context in which consumers intend to use various types of mobile services. As we have found (Carlsson et al., 2006) mobile service adoption differs from the traditional TAM studies. From a practical point of view, our results can be used to improve the relevance of mobile services. Although a multitude of mobile services is available for consumers, most consumers hardly use any mobile services other than SMS and MMS (Bouwman et al., 2007; Carlsson et al., 2006; Blechar et al., 2005).

The paper is structured as follows: we first develop the hypotheses based on an extensive literature research. Next, we describe the methodology and present the measurement model. We then apply Structural Regression modeling to test our hypotheses, present the models and the results of the testing. Finally, we conclude

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