

EXPLORING THE ANTECEDENTS OF #IFZ ONLINE SUPPORT COMMUNITY ADOPTION AND CONTINUED USE: A CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

MIHA BRATEC & TADEJ ROGELJA

Univerza na Primorskem, Fakulteta za turistične študije, Portorož, Slovenia.
E-mail: miha.bratec@fts.upr.si, tadej.rogelja@fts.upr.si

Abstract This conceptual paper presents the logic, theoretic foundations and rationale behind the development of the framework that will allow the authors to further develop the concept #IFZ online support community for tourism entrepreneurs. It can be seen as the conclusion of the conceptual phase of the broader action research that aims to develop, test and optimize the first online support community for tourism entrepreneurs in the country. Presented conceptual framework is ready to be further extended with qualitative research and then ready for the two-stage empirical testing that will be carried out during the first year of #IFZ existence.

Keywords:
#IFZ,
online
communities,
antecedents,
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adoption and
continuance,
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1 Introduction

Online communities represent a growing topic of interest in both the tourism industry and academic research since the times of popularisation of Web 2.0. (Lin & Lee, 2006). Within the broader scope of #TourismFromZero Initiative, the authors of this paper were directly involved in the development of online support community #IdeasFromZero. The aim of this community is to help early-stage entrepreneurs, who are trying to enter the online tourism marketplace when developing and launching tourism-related services or experiences. However, from the early stages of developing such communities, the authors were asking themselves a very practical question: “Which factors are the ones crucial for an online support community such as #IdeasFromZero to function in the long run?”

This was also the motivation for the authors to start exploring the antecedents of adoption and continuance intention of use of online support communities from the theoretical perspective in order to understand, how theory could explain and help them extract the key antecedents of such community’s adoption and continued use.

Present paper is rooted in technology adoption and more specifically, UTAUT theory (Venkatesh et al, 2003). This has proven successful in explaining the adoption of modern technology and e-commerce phenomena. However, as an upgrade, the paper also acknowledges the lack of concern in e-tourism research for exploring the continued use of technologies that was ultimately evidently pointed out by Yan et al. (2020).

This way the conceptual development is informed by the insights listed above as it brings the theoretical insights and by practical dilemmas related to adoption and use of online communities and applied to the case of #IFZ. Finally, the paper proposes holistic conceptual 2-stage online support community #IdeasFromZero continuance model based on (Bhattacharjee, 2001) IS continuance model, which outlines all possible antecedents of #IFZ community adoption and use that are ready to be empirically tested and validated in the near future.

2 Conceptual development

The external structure of the model strictly follows the one proposed by Bhattacharjee (2001) and is based on expectation-confirmation theory. This way it requires 2-stage testing for the same set of variables - once immediately after the stage of adoption of #IFZ community and once later, after a certain time of use.

For the internal part of the model, the authors follow the logic of the integrated UTAUT (Venkatesh et al, 2003: 447-451). This namely proposes four main variables that influence intention and usage of information technology. First, performance expectancy – “the degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help him or her to attain gains in job performance”. Second, effort expectancy – “the degree of ease associated with the use of the system”. Third, facilitating conditions – “the degree to which an individual believes that an organizational and technical infrastructure exists to support the use of the system”. Fourth, social influence – “the degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe he or she should use the new system”. Additionally, UTAUT also includes four additional “moderating” variables: “gender”, “age”, “experience”, and “voluntariness of use” that may increase or decrease the influence of the four main independent variables on the dependent variables – intention and use behaviour (Gruzd et al., 2012).

Since its development, the UTAUT model has been used in various contexts, and proved its robustness in a variety of fields, especially in explaining the e-commerce phenomena. Different authors extended its core variables with items such as the attitude (Dwivedi et al., 2017), innovativeness (San Martín & Herrero, 2012) to be able to better explain specific contexts of the adoption of different technology-based applications and activities. Similarly, Venkatesh, et al. (2016), in their recommendations for future UTAUT studies propose incorporating specifics of time and events as contextual attributes and moderators to further analyse the impacts of time and events on the changes of user perceptions and outcomes of adoption. On the contrary, a more limited research stream is focused on studying the disturbance concerns of technology adoption. Disturbance concerns are defined as malfunctions, interruptions, stress, anxiety, hidden transactional costs, or any anticipated potential loss caused by the use of IS (Lai, 2011). Such research explores the variables that hinder the adoption of a specific technological solution among the

customers, or within an organisation. Lai (2011) studies all possible disturbance concerns which hinder faster adoption of mobile commerce in Asia. This literature stream postulates a more holistic view of the variables affecting the adoption, also looking at the negative side of the novel technologies. It deals with concerns that individuals are facing, while adopting a certain new e-application or e-channel. This research stream can be considered relevant in helping the researcher to identify the possible disturbance concerns connected to the barriers for the acceptance of #IFZ community, which will need to be systematically tackled in order for the #IFZ community to be truly adopted by the practitioners.

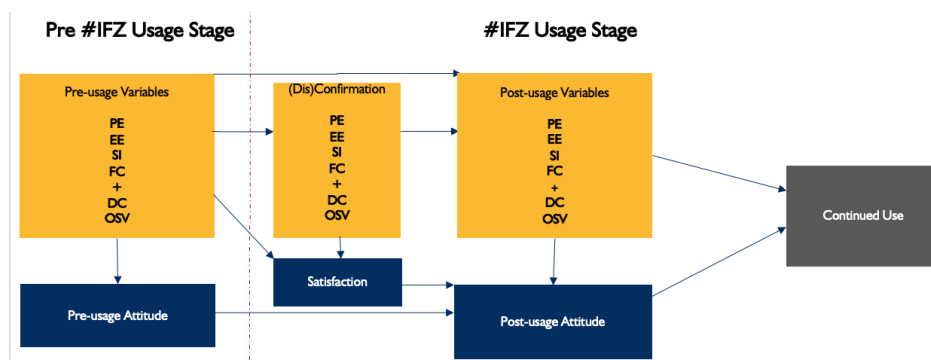


Figure 1: The 2-stage expectation-confirmation model for #IFZ including variable groups based on UTAUT

Legend: PE: performance expectancy; EE: effort expectancy; SI: social influence; FC: facilitating conditions; DC: disturbance concerns; OSV: other DDs specific variables; +: additional variables, not present in the original UTAUT model.

While the core UTAUT variables are clear and can easily be derived out of existing UTAUT-based questionnaires and then only slightly modified to fit the specifics of “IFZ community”, the disturbance concerns of #IFZ adoption and other context specific variables require exploratory qualitative research pre-phase including interviews with members and developers of the community in order to be clearly defined and thus ready for empirical testing.

The core UTAUT variables and items composed by logical synthesis of existing questionnaires and context specifics of #IFZ are presented below in Figure 2.

3 Concluding remarks

Aligned with the aim of the study and rooted in critical constructionist paradigm, the authors have conceptualised theoretically sound and practically applicable model to study the antecedents of #IFZ community adoption and continued use. The approach which combines a qualitative pre-phase as well as two-stage quantitative empirical testing phase blends extremely well to the general development phase of the experimental process of building the #IFZ community. It has both, the theoretical value as it provides the researchers a real-life context opportunity to study the technology adoption and continuance in two different stages, as well as methodological soundness often lacking in many case-based 1-stage adoption studies that represent the vast majority of UTAUT-based literature. Last but not least, the practical value of research will be highly useful in the development and popularisation of #IFZ community as it will provide the developing team with highly valuable insight on the key expectations and concerns of its target audience.

Performance Expectancy (PE)
PE1 #IFZ Community is useful for running your business.
PE2 Using #IFZ Community will make you more profitable in doing business.
PE3 Using #IFZ Community can increase your chances of achieving your business goals.
PE4 Using #IFZ Community can help improve the quality of your existing product design.
PE5 Using online #IFZ Community will allow you to spend less time achieving your business goals.

Effort Expectancy (EE)
EE1 Learning to use #IFZ Community to learn doing business is easy for you.
EE2 You expect the use of #IFZ Community to be clear and understandable.
EE3 It's easy for you to become proficient in using #IFZ Community to learn doing business.
EE4 Using online #IFZ Community will help you achieve faster product & business proficiency

Social Influence (SI)
SI1 People who are important to me think that I should use #IFZ Community for a business purpose
SI2 People who influence my behaviour think that I should use #IFZ Community for a business purpose
SI3 People whose opinions that I value prefer that I use #IFZ Community for a business purpose
SI4 People around me consider it is appropriate to use #IFZ Community for a business purpose

Facilitating Conditions (FC)
FC1 You have the necessary knowledge to use #IFZ Community to learn doing business.
FC2 You have colleagues who can help you when faced with #IFZ Community issues.
FC3 You have the resources you need to use online #IFZ Community to learn doing business.
FC4 #IFZ Community work similar as other online platforms you learnt how to use during the pandemic.

Behavioural Intention (BI)
BI1 You are determined to use #IFZ Community to learn doing business in the next month.
BI2 You expect that you should use online #IFZ Community to learn doing business in the next month.
BI3 You plan to use #IFZ Community to learn doing business in the next month.
BI4 You will use #IFZ Community when you have a business need.

Figure 2: Proposed questionnaire including core UTAUT variables and individual items

Note

This is a Published Scientific Conference Contribution.

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