
A COMPARISON OF JAPANESE AND AMERICAN STUDENTS' SPORT-RELATED MOBILE APPLICATION USAGE

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All authors:

Maki Itoh (corresp), Sun Kang, Namok Choi

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Synopsis:

With the spread of smartphones in the mobile industry, the importance of mobile application is growing rapidly. As of 2015, the number of smartphone users surpassed 1.9 billion globally, accounting for 182.6 million users in the United States and 82.2 million users in Japan (Statista, 2015). The main purpose of this study was to examine the difference between the Japanese and U.S. college students' motives for sport-related mobile applications (apps) usage. The study employed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Davis, 1989) and Motivation Scale for Sport Online Consumption (MSSOC; Seo & Green, 2008) to measure users' motives in detail.

Abstract:

Aim of study

With the spread of smartphones in the mobile industry, the importance of mobile application is growing rapidly. As of 2015, the number of smartphone users surpassed 1.9 billion globally, accounting for 182.6 million users in the United States and 82.2 million users in Japan (Statista, 2015). The main purpose of this study was to examine the difference between the Japanese and U.S. college students' motives for sport-related mobile applications (apps) usage. The study employed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Davis, 1989) and Motivation Scale for Sport Online Consumption (MSSOC; Seo & Green, 2008) to measure users' motives in detail.

Literature Review

In the field of technology, various attempts have been made to understand why and how people become involved with emerging technologies. The TAM represents one of the primary model that attempts to capture users' decision-making processes, in order to understand why some people accept and adopt certain technology mediums (Davis, 1989). While TAM examines the decision-making process of users, the concept of motivation attempts to explain the psychological and behavioral reasons behind actual consumption. The MSSOC

contains ten dimensions of motivation that are fundamental to understanding consumption behaviors regarding a new technology medium. In order to bridge the gap between sport and technology, the current study integrated the TAM and MSSOC to examine sport consumers' smartphone app usage.

Methodology

The target population for the current study was college students who were taking sport administration classes at a large Midwestern university in the U.S. and college students taking sport media classes at a Japanese University. Using a cross-sectional survey design, the instruments included 25 items on a 7-point Likert-type scale anchored by 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree. A total of 283 usable surveys were collected. In regards to demographics, 68.1% (n = 195) of the respondents were male and mean age was 22 (SD = 3.95). The majority of the respondents were White (57.4%, n = 162) and Asian (31.2%, n = 88). For the U.S. participants, 81.54% of the respondents have used or downloaded any type of sport-related apps, while only 47.8% participants in Japan used or downloaded some type of sport-related app. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to compare the mean differences in seven subscales measuring motives (i.e. information, entertainment, fanship, convenience, economic, curiosity, trends), which was modified from the TAM and MSSOC.

Results

The MANOVA results revealed significant difference in linear combination of the seven motives between the two countries. The Wilks' η^2 for the motives were .06, $F(7, 275) = 570.79$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .89$. The univariate ANOVA for all seven motives were statistically significant (F ranging from 8.74 to 299.40, partial η^2 ranging from .03 to .52), and the mean scores for all seven motives were higher for the students in the U.S. In addition, open responses were collected from the Japanese students who did not download sport-related apps and they indicated, "there is no need to download particular app because we can obtain information from the Internet" and "not interested" as part of their reason. The data were also collected to further understand the reasons that prevent Japanese students from using the sport-related apps. Furthermore, noticeable difference was also identified between the two countries on the number of apps downloaded and frequency of usage.

Discussion and implications

Overall, the sport-related apps usage was much lower for Japanese students when compared to the American students. One of the plausible reasons may derive from the way sport is marketed in the U.S. that encourage smartphone users' to become engaged with their smartphones to further enhance their fan experience (Kang, Ha, Hambrick, in press). From a Japanese students' perspective, app usage may have been perceived as a threat or an unnecessary tool wasting smartphones' memory space (MIC, 2015). The mobile industry continues to expand globally, and there are opportunities for application developer to promote app usage to reach greater fan base and enhance users' sport experience. Considering the upcoming international sport events in Japan such as the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2019 Rugby World Cup, sport managers needs to consider sport-related application as an option to satisfy global sport consumers that are accustomed to convenience provided

by media-contents on their smartphones. The details from this study will be discussed in greater detail at the conference.

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