Students' dependence on smart phones: The influence of social needs, social influences and convenience

Abstract

Purpose

– The purpose of this paper is to assess whether social needs, social influences and convenience of smart phones affects students' dependence on them. This research also examines whether students' dependence on smart phones influences their purchase behaviour. This investigation is conducted among the students in a public university in the Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia.

Design/methodology/approach

– The research used a multiple regression analysis in an attempt to achieve the objective. The construct validity was assessed by computing the principal axis factor with varimax rotations. In total, 200 completed and usable questionnaires were received from the respondents who comprised students from a public university in the Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia. A simple random sampling method was utilised where every unit in the population had an equal chance to be selected.

Findings

– Results via multiple regression analysis revealed that social needs and social influences significantly affect students' dependence on smart phones. The first was found to have the strongest effect. A strong relationship also existed between dependence on smart phones and students' purchase behaviour.

Research limitations/implications

– This study contributes significantly in confirming findings from similar research that could furnish statistical evidence in research findings to the smart phone provider in meeting customer needs to better create up-to-date smart phones with recent features through strategic, holistic marketing management and planning.

Practical implications

– This research should contribute significantly to academics and educational developers in encouraging the students' use of personal technologies such as smart phones and tablet PCs to enhance their learning process. On the smart phone provider side, the research findings could motivate them to continuously increase the smart phone functionality to be more relevant to students. The fact that dependence on smart phones contributes significantly in the students' purchase behaviour may lead to better insights that they depend on the smart phone, which causes them to feel insecure when it is not with them. Their positive experience with smart phones outweighs their negative experience, as their usage of smart phones is high.

Originality/value

– The research provides a unique perspective of students' dependence on smart phones, which is not much covered in the literature in the Malaysia context. The measurement produced can be used as a research tool for more exploratory and explanatory research regarding students' use of personal technologies such as smart phones and tablet PCs.