Exploring the Continued Intention in Playing Mobile Games

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Abstract: Mobile games have become popular in recent years and people play mobile games during their spare time. This study explored the reasons why people keep on playing mobile games. The research question is: What drives people to continue to play mobile games. It was hypothesized that perceived enjoyment and subjective norms influenced people's continued intention on playing mobile games. A survey was distributed through Facebook and set up in GoogleDoc, with 200 completed valid questionnaires. The result showed that perceived enjoyment had a significant and positive relationship to continued intention of playing mobile games ($\beta = 0.232$, $p < .001$), and subjective norms also had a positive relationship with continued intention ($\beta = 0.462$, $p < .001$). The adjusted R-Squared value of perceived enjoyment and subjective norms to continued intention was 0.357. The implications of these findings were discussed.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the functions of mobile phone become more diversified, and mobile game is one of the most popular functions for entertainment. Games like "Puzzle and Dragon" and "Candy Crash" could even spread as a hot issue among adults and kids, that's why mobile game has already become a rapidly growing business. According to App Annie & IDC Portable Gaming Report, people's expense on IOS App Store and Google Play Store are 4 times than that of gaming-optimized handhelds (Portable Gaming Spotlight, 2013). And another international full service market research and consulting firm named Newzoo released a report showing that, game revenues will increase to USD$70.4 billion worldwide in 2013 and the market for Smartphone and Tablet games will grow 35% to USD$12.3 billion (Global Games Market, 2013).

As the above mentioned, mobile games have shown a substantial growth in these years, players are spending more time and room on the entertaining content on Smartphones. However, we still know little about the underlying motives of the players - what factors drive people to play certain mobile games, and why they would continue to play. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the key factors that are highly related to the continued intention for players to play mobile games. The study could help to find out the reasons leading to mobile game addiction. Moreover, the developers of mobile games could also gain benefits from this study. We set the following research questions: (1) What are the factors influencing the continued intention of playing mobile games? And (2) What are the relationships between the factors?

The rest of the study was organized as follows. The next section summarized the factors affecting players' continued intention towards playing mobile games from previous researches. Then, a model was proposed to explain how these factors affected continued intention. And the fourth section described the methodology used to collect data and its validation. The findings and testing results were reported in the fifth section, and the implication was discussed. The paper concluded by acknowledging the limitations of the study and suggesting the areas for further research.

2. Literature Review

In order to answer the research question, we narrowed our focus on online game issues, their causes and effects. Therefore, we started a preliminary search on online database EBSCO Academic Search. We have reviewed over 50 journal papers by searching generic terms "online game" and "factor" or "consequence" in subject and abstract. We summarized the common factors and consequences in a table (see Appendix I). According to the above generic terms, we scanned the journals and narrowed down to those relevant to "continued intention". As a result, we reviewed 13 journals as shown in References.

We used Continued Intention as dependent variable while Perceived Enjoyment and Subjective Norm were independent variables.

2.1 Continued Intention

A study described that "game developers tried to increase the duration of online game playing time by making a new online game using new techniques" (Choi & Kim, 2004, p.12). The research studied the topic of continued intention to play online games. In fact, mobile phone has widely spread and linked the world up, greatly enhanced interaction between people. As the market of online game grows mature, players have to pay for certain games. So the new trend is that, more people start to use their mobile devices as tools for playing games instead of computers.

The previous study confirmed techniques or high quality image was a determinant to continued intention of a gamer to play games. However, some studies found that continued intention to play games was highly related to gamers' personal characteristics and psychological factors. For instance, a study found that customers viewed online games as innovative IT services on the Internet (Ha, Yoon, & Choi,

2007). Another study described that "the IT use literature, based primarily on attitude theories from social psychology, is relevant to understanding people's behavior related to online games" (Lee & Tsai, 2010, p.605).

This study examined the continued intention (dependent variable) to play mobile games, which is an example of innovative IT services connecting with social system and personal characteristics. We expect that continued intention is a necessary element to explain the cause of game addiction, and to create a new environment for game developers.

2.2 Perceived Enjoyment

Mobile game players indulge in the games because they can perceive enjoyment and then lead to continued intention. Perceived enjoyment is a relatively important driving factor to online games (Shin, 2010). Therefore, we would try to find out if it could apply on mobile games as well. Providing enjoyment to players is the goal of every game. If players do not enjoy the game, they will not play the game (Sweetser & Wyeth, 2005).

According to Shin's study (2010), "perceived enjoyment is similar to playability, which is used in popular games criticism to indicate the extent to which a certain game has the capability to provide enjoyment for a player over an extended period." Perceiving enjoyment is a significant factor that positively affects the intention of players and it facilitates player's attitude (Shin, 2010). The greater enjoyment the players received, the greater interests for them to continue to play (Smyth, 2007). People feel safe when things are under control and they try to avoid situations with the domination of other forces.

By playing games, people are able to achieve the goal all by themselves. They can perceive enjoyment from getting everything under control in games which makes them feel satisfy (Klimmt, Hartmann, & Frey, 2007). When people feel satisfied, they would probably play it more often.

2.3 Subjective Norm

A study had pointed out that, teenagers' personality and self-esteem factors significantly predicted the level of addictive tendency (Wilson, Fornasier, & White, 2010). Several researchers also found that the social influence of people was an important factor to continued intention (Brown & Venkatesh, 2005; Hsu & Lu, 2007; Lin & Chiang, 2013). According to previous researches, subjective norm is one of the significant factors affecting users' intention (Shin, 2010).

Subjective norm refers to an influential person's support or objection to behaviors that affect a person's cognition (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p.16). A study by Shin (2010), investigated the perceived factors contributing to the adopted behaviors on playing Multiplayer Online Role-Playing games (MMORPG).

Shin modified the technology acceptance model with perceived experience on games and social norm. It is suggested that people desire to gain acceptance in peer groups and the Multiplayer game community. According to Shin's hypothesis, subjective norm positively related to users' behavioral intention and loyalty to play MMORPG. Results were analyzed from 312 web questionnaires, proving the positive relationship of subjective norm to MMORPG-playing intention and loyalty.

Subjective Norm is more significant than loyalty to the players' intention. Findings also stated the stronger impact of subjective norm on MMORPG players than other online-application players. Recent studies (e.g., Shin, 2010; Lee & Tsai, 2010), mainly focused on the online games platform, so we considered the era of mobile phone games.
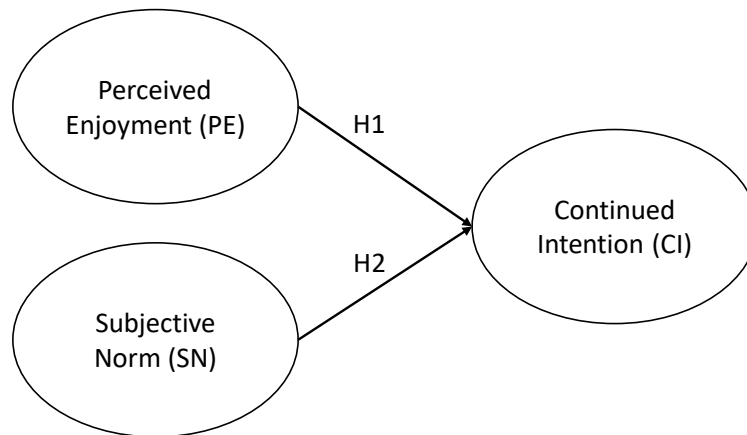
3. Hypotheses & Model Development

Figure 1. Model Framework

We proposed the above model about Continued Intention (CI) with two factors: Perceived Enjoyment (PE) and Subjective Norm (SN).

3.1 Perceived Enjoyment and Continued Intention

Perceived enjoyment refers to an individual's judgment on whether the game is enjoyable or not. If they find it interesting, they would be more willing to play and tend to play the mobile game continuously, and vice versa.

Therefore, we would test whether perceived enjoyment has a positive effect on mobile game players' continued intention to play the game or not. This led to the following hypothesis:

H1: Perceived enjoyment is positively related to players' continued intention toward playing mobile games.

3.2 Subjective Norm and Continued Intention

Previous findings showed that, the subjective norm is positively related to games playing intention (Hsu & Lu, 2007; Lin & Chiang, 2013; Shin, 2010). As mobile phones are now the common devices for people to communicate with others, we expected that social bonding was getting more significant to the factors affecting people's view on playing mobile games. The opinion of important people will project to their intention to play certain games continuously. Therefore, we proposed that:

H2: Subjective norm of a mobile game player is positively related to his/her continued intention toward mobile games.

4. Methodology

4.1 Background

In this study, the subjects were people who play mobile games using their electronic devices, such as Smartphones and tablets. They answered a set of questions about their experiences on the mobile games they have played recently. We collected 217 questionnaires and analyzed 200 completed questionnaires. According to Comrey (1988), the sample size of 200 is adequate in most cases of ordinary factor analysis that involve no more than 40 items.

4.2 Subjects

A survey instrument was distributed to web users. We sent out 1348 invitation through Facebook and collected 217 questionnaires, with a response rate 16.10%. Removed with extreme cases and outliners, we analyzed 200 completed questionnaires. The questionnaire was distributed and collected in the second and third week of November 2013.

4.3 Measurement Items

This study measured two constructs: Perceived Enjoyment (PE) and Subjective Norm (SN). We adapted these measuring items from an exploratory research (Lee & Tsai, 2010) and modified it in the topic of mobile games. We also traced the source and adapted measuring items: three items for continued intentions (Hsu & Lu, 2004), five items for subjective norms (Hsu & Lu, 2004; Lin & Lu, 2011), and five items for perceived enjoyment (Heijden, 2004; Nysveen, Pedersen, Thorbjornsen, & Berthon, 2005).

We used GoogleDoc to deliver the online questionnaire (see Appendix II). Each item was measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

4.4 Data Collection

Questionnaires were collected through GoogleDoc which contained 3 web pages. Data were collected from November 11 to November 26 in 2013. All the data were inputted into SPSS for further analysis.

5. Findings

5.1 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Items	Descriptive Statistics
Gender	Male: 106 (53%); Female: 94 (47%)
Age (13 – 51)	*M* (*SD*): 22.09 (5.527)
Education Level	Secondary School: 25(12.5%);
	Higher Education: 175 (87.5%)

(*N*=200)

The sample included 106 male (53%) and 94 female (47%), comparable to the population ratio of gender. All of the respondents finished the whole questionnaire.

Most of the respondents were in their 20s: 25 respondents were between 13 and 19 (12.5%); 160 respondents were between 20 and 29 (80%); 15 respondents were 30 or above (7.5%). Furthermore, 175 of respondents (80%) received higher education, while 25 respondents received secondary school education (12.5%).

5.2 Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Constructs

	M	*SD*	Cronbach's alpha
Continued Intention			0.904
CI1	4.46	1.507	
CI2	4.03	1.638	
CI3	3.64	1.608	
Subjective Norms			0.888
SN1	3.34	1.525	
SN2	3.61	1.750	
SN3	3.55	1.482	
SN4	3.51	1.595	
SN5	3.47	1.441	
Perceived Enjoyment			0.904
PE1	4.78	1.286	
PE2	4.96	1.204	
PE3	4.52	1.421	
PE4	4.65	1.256	
PE5	4.99	1.228	

CI had three items with means from 3.64 to 4.46 and SD from 1.507 to 1.638. SN had five items with means from 3.34 to 3.61 and SD from 1.441 to 1.750. And PE had five items with means from 4.52 to 4.99 and SD from 1.204 to 1.421.

5.3 Instrument Validation

Internal consistency was tested by reliability Cronbach's alpha value where values greater than 0.7 is considered reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1974). The alpha values for CI, SN and PE were 0.904, 0.888 and 0.904 respectively. It showed that all the constructs were reliable and internal consistent.

Table 3
Factor Analysis

	Component		
	1	**2**	**3**
CI1	.351	.089	**.847**
CI2	.234	.217	**.878**
CI3	.243	.292	**.823**
SN1	.117	**.802**	.153
SN2	.141	**.770**	.161
SN3	.160	**.861**	.182
SN4	.143	**.858**	.118
SN5	.249	**.730**	.088
PE1	**.826**	.145	.215
PE2	**.844**	.108	.289
PE3	**.800**	.225	.135
PE4	**.789**	.186	.130
PE5	**.767**	.199	.314

Eigen Values	**6.248**	**2.163**	**1.292**
% of Variance	**48.07%**	**16.64%**	**9.94%**

Three components were extracted by principal components, Varimax rotation factor analysis. The Eigen Values were 6.248, 2.163 and 1.292 where the percentage of total variance explained was 74.65%.

The constructs exhibited convergent validity as all the factor loadings were significant (>0.7, Hair et al., 2010). The constructs were all distinct without any significant cross-loadings, exhibited discriminant validity.

Therefore, the instrument was both reliable and valid. Summed mean scores was computed for each construct and for regression analysis of their relationship test.

5.4 Model & Hypotheses Testing

We used a linear multiple regression to analyze the model and to test the relationships of two hypotheses H1 and H2.

Table 4
Regression Model Summary

	Model Summary			**ANOVA**	
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	*F*	*Sig.*
.598	.357	.351	1.17023	54.762	.000

The overall model was found significant ($p < .001$) and the R-Squared values showed that Perceived Enjoyment (PE) and Subjective Norm (SN) explained 35.7% of the variance in Continued Intention (CI).

Table 5
Hypotheses Testing Results

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.194	.381		0.511	.610
SN	.259	.070	.232	3.676	.000
PE	.616	.084	.462	7.337	.000

The coefficient table of the regression analysis showed that:

Subjective Norm was found to be significant and positively related to Continued Intention ($\beta = 0.232$, $p < .001$). For every standardized unit of Subjective Norm increased, Continued Intention would increase by 0.232 standardized units.

Perceived Enjoyment was found to be significant and positively related to Continued Intention ($\beta = 0.462$, $p < .001$). For every standardized unit of Perceived Enjoyment increased, Continued Intention would increase by 0.462 standardized units.
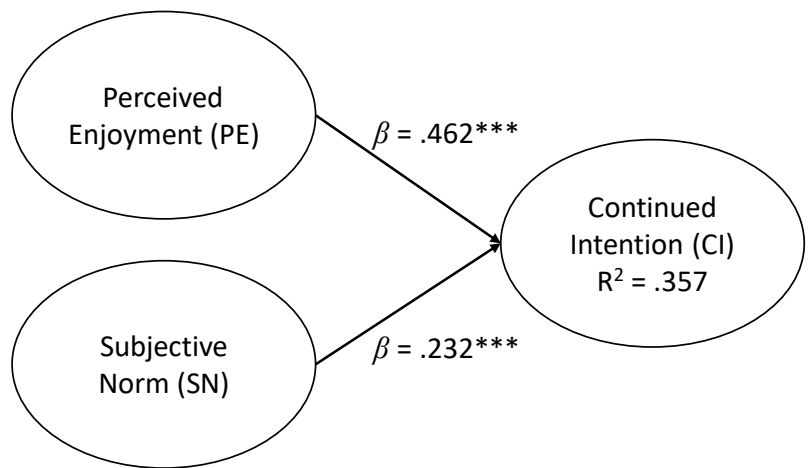
$(*** p < .001)$
Figure 2. Model of Test Results and Path Coefficients

6. Discussion

6.1 Perceived Enjoyment and Continued Intention

Perceived enjoyment had a direct and significant relationship with continued intention. This result supported hypothesis (H1). Consistent with previous studies (Smyth, 2007; Sweetser & Wyeth, 2005), people tend to continue playing games if they feel interested. Individuals will engage in a particular activity if they are feeling fun and enjoyable.

The enjoyable and memorable experience of a player gains from playing games or IT facilities will motivate him or her to continue to play next time. By playing mobile games, players feel satisfied through getting higher scores and passing levels. They feel challenging and are encouraged to perform better in the games.

Previous studies also had shown that perceived enjoyment was the significant factor of a player's continued intention of playing online games or video games (Klimmt, Hartmann, & Frey, 2007; Shin, 2010). Yet, due to the rapid development of mobile phones, we found that perceived enjoyment could be gained from mobile devices and perceived enjoyment had direct effect on facilitating players' intention to continue playing mobile games.

6.2 Subjective Norm and Continued Intention

Subjective Norm had a direct and significant relationship with Continued Intention, which supported hypothesis (H2). These subjective norms are influenced by players' social bonding and acceptance of peer groups, which means that individuals' behavior is affected by the people who they think are important to them. Previous research found that personal interaction between players and online games affects players' attitudes toward online games (Lin & Chiang, 2013). Our study found that this result could be applied to mobile games as well.

People are developing more connections through social media and mobile phones currently, which provide peer groups a platform. We also found that the peer's attitude was important and highly related to a player's willingness to continue playing a mobile game. A good feedback from a player's important people was a motivation for him or her to continue to play the games.

Previous studies found that subjective norm usually less significant than perceived enjoyment on continued intention on playing online games (Lee & Tsai, 2010; Shin, 2010), this study proved that

subjective norms (Beta =0.232, *p* < .001) is still less significant than perceived enjoyment (Beta =0.462, *p* < .001) on motivating the players continue to play mobile games.

6.3 Continued Intention

There are many other factors affecting the Continued Intention of playing mobile games which have not been included in this study; for example, attitude towards playing games and flow experience. Previous study mentioned that, new techniques added in mobile games could prolong the duration of playing time (Choi & Kim, 2004).

Continued Intention of players should also be connected to the adoption of game developers. Further research could explore how the factors affect and benefit the industry of mobile games.

6.4 Theoretical Contribution

As the previous studies mainly focused on the continued intention of playing online games, we extended the platform towards mobile games in this study, and the result proved that both factors (Perceived Enjoyment and Subjective Norm) are still applicable on mobile games.

6.5 Practical Contribution

Mobile phone nowadays includes lots of functions, just like a tiny portable computer. It is convenient and it becomes more popular to play mobile games. Therefore, this study could benefit mobile game developers on the design strategies. As this study found a significant relationship between perceived enjoyment and continued intention to play mobile games, we suggest the game developers to focus the game design on enhancing players' enjoyment, for example, by rewards and missions.

Beside the perceived enjoyment of players, our study also found subjective norm significant to players' continued playing intention. People who are important to the players also affected the continued intention of playing mobile games. Game developers could consider the peer influence and games trend among players while promoting and designing games. The potential of developing cooperation and interaction games could be further studied in mobile game industry.

6.6 Limitations and Further Studies

There were a few limitations in this study. First, our research results were mainly obtained from the people in Hong Kong. The results could not be generalized to a wider domain. Second, we used Facebook as a platform to send out our questionnaires and collected the results in the same way, which might miss some mobile game players who are inactive on social media. Third, the proposed model was based only on two constructs. There might be other key factors but not studied here.

We could further extend the method of data collection in order to reach respondents more comprehensively, including those inactive users on social platform. In addition, there are other factors or determinants that could be related to continued intention of playing mobile games. Further studies could extend our model to other constructs and examine the factors of attitude and flow experience.

At the same time, people connect with each other through social networking websites and instant message applications this day and age. Hence, many mobile games designers include friends interact function, such as giving lives and providing platforms for sharing tips, in order to make them enjoyable. We cannot ignore the interactivity between players and friends though we did not measure the effectiveness of interactivity in this study. To modify the study comprehensively, it should be included.

Another limitation refers to the cross-sectional nature of the study. The relationship between the variables is examined, but no causal relationship can be proved in this study. Further studies could

investigate any existence of causal relationship between perceived enjoyment, subjective norm and continued intention.

The other limitation is that this is a cross-sectional study and thus no causal relationship between the variables can be established.

This study was in initial stage. Though we found out that there was positive relationship between perceived enjoyment and continued intention of playing mobile games ($\beta = 0.232$, $p < .001$), the beta value was lower than the standard coefficient. We will improve the limitations in further study.

7. Conclusion

This study examined two constructs: Perceived Enjoyment (PE) and Subjective Norm (SN) to explain how the continued intention of playing mobile games can be motivated by the players' perceived enjoyment and their social interactions in the peer groups. The results showed that Perceived Enjoyment and Subjective Norm were key factors leading players to continue playing mobile games. This study provides a concrete model with empirical evidence to support further studies of this phenomenon.

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Appendix

Appendix I. Summary Table for Literature Review

Arthur, Year	Factor	Consequence	Platform
Brown & Venkatesh, 2005		Continued Intention of playing game	computer use in household
Choi & Kim, 2004	Experience of enjoyment		Korean online games
Klimmt, Hartmann, , & Frey, 2007		Enjoyment of playing game	a java applet video game programmed by Remi Faitout
Shin, 2010	Perceived enjoyment, Subjective norm enjoyment, Perceived security, Attitude, Flow, Subjective norm,	Continued Intention of playing game	Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games
Ha, Yoon, & Choi, 2007	Perceived enjoyment		Mobile Broadband Wireless Access technology-based (MBWA) games
Smyth, 2007	Enjoyment on playing	Continued Intention of playing game	MMORPG, Computer, Arcade, Console
Lin, & Chiang, 2013	Perceived playfulness, Subjective norm	Intention to use online games	Online game
Hsu, & Lu, 2007	Perceived enjoyment, Social norms		Online game
Lee, & Tsai, 2010	Perceived enjoyment, Subjective norm	Continued intention to play online games	Online games
Sweetser, & Wyeth, 2005	Player enjoyment		Computer games

Appendix II. Measurement Items Used in the Study

Constructs (Sources) – Measurement Items

Continued intentions (CI): (Hsu & Lu, 2004)

CI1: I intend to continue playing [X] in the future.

CI2: I will keep playing [X] as regularly as I do now.

CI3: I will continue playing [X] as much as possible in the future.

Subjective norm (SN): (Hsu & Lu, 2004); (Lin & Lu, 2011)

SN1: My friends think that I should play [X].

SN2: I engage in a high level of interaction with other [X] players.

SN3: People important to me supported my playing with [X]

SN4: People who influence my behavior wanted me to play [X] instead of others

SN5: Most people who are important to me would think that playing [X] is a wise idea.

Perceived enjoyment (PE): (Heijden , 2004; Nysveen, Pedersen, Thorbjornsen, & Berthon, 2005)

PE1: Playing [X] provide me with a lot of enjoyment.

PE2: The process of playing [X] is enjoyable.

PE3: I enjoyed using [X] because it makes me excited.

PE4: While playing [X], I experience pleasure.

PE5: Overall, I believe that [X] is playful

Note. [X]: Refers to any mobile games that the respondents played most and listed

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