

Investigation of the Factors Influencing on Downloading Music by College Students with Using Structural Equations

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Abstract

Influencing factors of marketplaces and technology have left a deep effect on the music industry. Insisting on the threats coming from P2P technologies, agents of this industry in some countries are continuing to seek for punitive laws against those who present a huge number of music to others to copy. In Iran, however, few laws have been regulated and multimedia files available on the internet have found a wholly new and extremely aggressive form of media behaviors. This study is aimed at developing a model for testing the factors which predict downloading purposes by college students to gain insight into their future behaviors.

Introduction

Recent advances in information technology have drastically changed work systems and processes in many areas. Entertainment industry, especially music branch, is under deep influence of such technological changes. Music-associated technologies such as audio compression techniques and applications, P2P file sharing networks such as Napster in 1999, and online music stores in 2000 were introduced in a relatively short period of time and gained enormous popularity. Music industry and its legal section, Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), has repeatedly asserted that appearance of technologies, particularly P2P internet networks, has had negative effects on their business. According to RIAA, sales of music files have seriously dropped in both number of sold units and dollar value since 2000 (www.riaa.org). As suggested by RIAA, the sudden drop in profits, which is a consequence of long-haul, constant growth of music industry, is directly associated with free-of-charge music sharing services in online P2P systems. This claim attracted many attentions and was a topic of heated discussions (Liebowitz 2004, King).

In this regard, the main part of the discussion is that online sharing of music results in plagiarism; that is to say, does such music sharing help or harm this industry? Proponents agree that since final expense of digital music reproduction is low and music is a semi-public product, higher value and, possibly, network externality (an expression in economics that refers to effect of customers on goods value) would be subject to little damage by free sharing

of music. P2P technologies are regarded as factors which facilitate free access to music instead of making legal purchases, provoking a rise in the number of free-riders, i.e., those who use services without disbursement, which can reduce efficiency of marketplace in music industry (Zentner, 2008; Alexander, 2002). Claiming that online sharing of music has left a destructive impact on music industry, RIAA defends a more severe enforcement of copyright rules (Harmon, 2003).

There are opponents to above issue, however, who believe that P2P systems can impressively augment ability of users in downloading samples of music. Undoubtedly, digital technologies have made easier (Barua et al., 2001; Bakos et al., 1999; Brynjolfsson and Smith, 2000) and less expensive (Gopal et al., 2004) information sharing and samplings for users. P2P-facilitated contact of customers with music can potentially be profitable for the music industry.

Although each side's viewpoints take resort to music's inherent insight and theory, accurate empirical assessment of the factors influencing on music sharing is little and scarce. Most existing research is based on either the event definition or investigation and review. (Wu, 2005; Zentner, 2008)

Purpose of the research is gaining insight into the factors influencing on file sharing in music industry.

Research's Model

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms are one of the main structures of logical action theory that illustrate the general conception of an individual from what his/her friends believe that he/she should or should not perform. That is why, determination to use or disuse is influenced by social pressures exerted on the individual by parents, coworkers, friends, etc. Some studies on reception of new electronic services have inserted this structure in their study model, evaluating its impact on determination of people to use or disuse internet banking services. Among such studies is Lee's, whose results indicate that this structure is influencing on making decision to use portable banking services (Lee, 2009).

Orientations direct people on how to commit themselves to special behaviors. They influence on individual norms, orientation to other people, opinions about others' behaviors, and using a special behavior. Orientations constitute the most important factor which determines intentions of an individual to perform a behavior (Walter and Paravouada 2007)

Several studies are conducted regarding students' orientation to unauthorized reproduction of music and software. They show that orientation comes with a powerful impact on making decision to reproduce music and software or prevent to do so. Such research indicate similar results respecting plagiarism, confirming that college students do not consider unauthorized reproduction as an illegal or immoral behavior. Christensen and Eining (1991), for instance, have carried out studies to investigate the factors influencing on unauthorized reproduction of software by accounting students in the US. They found that the students do not consider unauthorized reproduction as inappropriate and believe that their friends and professors are on the same belief, too. Results affirm the hypothesis that orientation toward unauthorized reproduction of software has a direct relationship with unauthorized reproduction of software and it is less likely that students who consider it as an inappropriate behavior commit the same.

Siegfried (2004) led a research among college students in two American universities and found that they think that reproduction of commercial software and downloading music from internet is authorized. Obviously, college students do not characterize downloading music

from internet problematic and they are on the belief that artists' consent to download the music is of the least importance.

Although unauthorized reproduction of software and music are two distinct issues, the two share some common aspects. Therefore, there is a similar basic orientation toward both. Some theorists believe that only large companies and a few of persons are, as supposed by unauthorized reproducers of software and music, sacrificed due to common application of files in this regard(Oberholzer-. and Strumpf, 2007)

As guidelines for social performance, cultural norms play a vital role and are dependent upon sociocultural environments such as ordinary orientations, common beliefs, conventions, and many other public factors.

Cultural differences influence on social behaviors and how we deal with them. People of different cultures observe their social environment in many diversified methods. Each society has its own distinct cultural characteristics shaped by pattern of beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values. According to Triandis, the most important cultural distinction is the difference between individualism and collectivism, with the former referring to the culture in which social behavior or performance is individually directed, while the latter to a group-oriented culture where individual cultural factors are derived from groups or families. In individualism, people perform independent of groups and tend to take no notice of collective demands. They place their attitudes, beliefs, or emotions as the basis of their behaviors(Shen. and Khalifa, 2010), In collectivism, on the other side, group-oriented behaviors are based on roles and conventions. Collectivists consider aspects of a group such as family, friends, and society and define them as intergroup members who impact on different social behaviors). Iranians have a particular collectivist culture, insisting on the fact that people should share with their society what they generate.

Individualism gives the right to people to make their own decisions and prevent doing something without others' interference. Ethics, in individualism, is totally individual-based. In oriental cultures, individuals consider doing something which is the best option at a particular situation. In case of conflict between an individual's and his/her group's demands, the former should ethically comply with those of the latter. Group morality attaches importance to each and every individual, emphasizing on social health. Some studies have proved that culture exerts influence on unauthorized digital reproduction. For instance, Swinyard (1990) says that oriental cultures stress upon the fact that reproducers should share their products with their society. Researchers conducted a cross-cultural study on ethics and performance of unauthorized reproduction of software in order to investigate the difference between unauthorized reproductions among college students in the US and Singapore based on American and Asian cultural background. Swinyard (1990) proved that Chinese people are more capable to make unauthorized reproductions than their American counterparts. With regard to an ethical decision, he found that Singaporean college students are, in their decisions to make unauthorized reproductions, more influenced by public prosperity ethics such as personal profit, familial profit, and societal interests than by laws and regularity. This orientation says that Asians are less expected to follow copyright laws as they regard the profit ensuing from copyright violation more cautiously. Swinyard continues to assert that Asian culture offers less support for copyright laws, but more for humanitarian interests and advantages that are repercussions there from.

Perceived Ease of Use

Perceived Ease of Use is one of the main structures of the model for technology reception that refers to the degree to which an individual believes that making use of a special system is possible without making colossal effort (Davis, 1989). Therefore, Perceived Ease of Use implies the user's perception from user-friendliness of a system. This structure has been used in many technology-related studies by different scholars. Investigations by Dover (1998) in the US showed that difficulties in realization and application of internet banking services are one of the reasons they have failed. In this study, Perceived Ease of Use has been indicated as one of the factors for reception of electronic services in England and Ireland. In many studies related to reception of internet services, this structure has been enumerated by users as one of the important factors in admitting internet services (Dover, 1988).

A Summary of Hypotheses related to Unauthorized Sharing of Files

According to results and hypotheses from practical research, there are factors such as subjective norms, attitudes, legal acquaintance, and Perceived Ease of Use that influence on the possibility of engagement in unauthorized reproduction of digital music. According to results, students have confessed that price constitutes a main reason of their unauthorized downloading the music—the file sharing which reduces the possibility of music acquisition. Consequently, this is safe to suppose that price constitutes the main reason of unauthorized downloading the music by students, many of whom download the music freely and, after sharing the file, there would be no CD purchasing.

There are other such factors as easiness of finding songs that increases college students' stimuli for unauthorized downloading of the music. Cultural hypotheses suggested by Triandis show that cultural differences impact on social behavior and the perceptions thereof—the fact that assist us in gaining insight into the relationship between culture and unauthorized reproduction of music.

This can be supposed that legal in acquaintance is related to unauthorized reproduction of music by students. Culture and social environment result to increasing orientations that sharing the reproduced music is socially authorized.

Research's Hypotheses

Based on the results from previous research, the hypotheses that will be investigated in this study can be briefly delineated as follows and showed in figure 1:

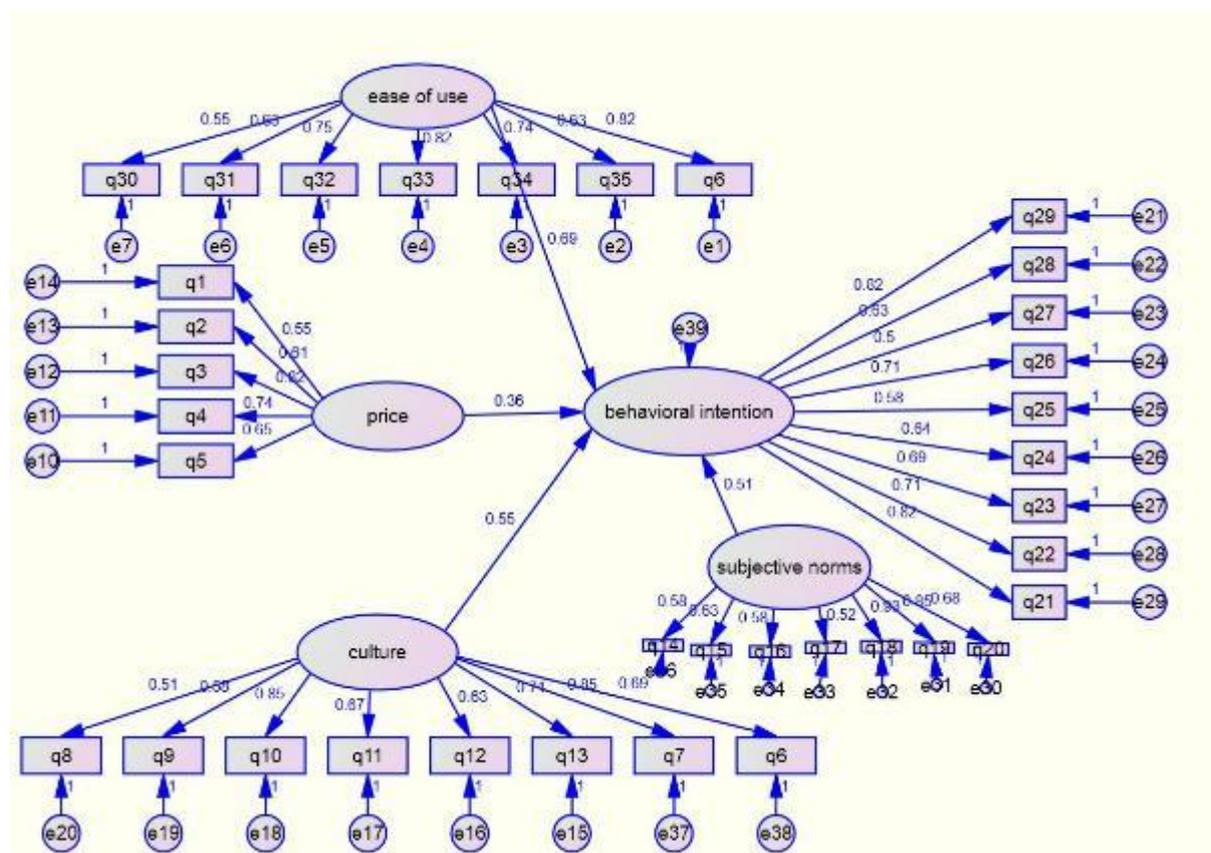


figure 1: Amos output

Price constitutes a reason for college students to download the music in an unauthorized way. Impact coefficient for this hypothesis is 0.36, whose regression coefficient has a significant difference with zero. This hypothesis is, therefore, affirmed with 95 percent confidence: this is to state that price constitutes a reason for college students to download the music in an unauthorized way.

There is a reversed relationship between behavior and orientation of unauthorized reproduction of music by college students, on the one hand, and their acquaintance with the copyright laws, on the other.

Impact coefficient for this hypothesis is 0.55, whose regression coefficient has a significant difference with zero. This hypothesis is, therefore, affirmed with 95 percent confidence: this is to state that there is a reversed relationship between behavior and orientation of unauthorized reproduction of music by college students, on the one hand, and their acquaintance with the copyright laws, on the other.

Subjective norms leave an influence on college students' behavioral intentions in unauthorized downloading of music.

Impact coefficient for this hypothesis is 0.51, whose regression coefficient has a significant difference with zero. This hypothesis is, therefore, affirmed with 95 percent confidence: this is to state that subjective norms leave an influence on college students' behavioral intentions in unauthorized downloading of music.

Ease of use leaves an influence on college students' behavioral intentions in unauthorized downloading of music.

Impact coefficient for this hypothesis is 0.69, whose regression coefficient has a significant difference with zero. This hypothesis is, therefore, affirmed with 95 percent confidence: this

is to state that ease of use leaves an influence on college students' behavioral intentions in unauthorized downloading of music.

Conclusions

In this study, results were sufficient to provide answers for research questions and conclusions. College students consisted research subjects. Most results gained from this study are in accord with those obtained in previous research, which were described in the section for hypothesis theory. Most prior research that concentrated on college students found that attendants have pre-orientation toward unauthorized reproduction and are not totally aware of copyright laws.

Results of this study that focuses on college students are consistent with such findings. In addition, most college students in this research do not regard unauthorized reproduction as a morally wrong and/or illegal behavior, which is again in accord with previous research. A conclusion opposed to research hypotheses is that students do not consider price as an important factor in unauthorized reproduction of software and music. In contrast, ease of use was found to be the most known reason for college students to engage in unauthorized reproduction of files in this research. This can be explained as: prior research has mostly concentrated on unauthorized reproduction of software and it is believed that software is more expensive than music CDs; thus, price constitutes most likely the main reason for unauthorized reproduction of software than that of music.

Therefore, ease of use can be named as the chief factor of downloading music by college students, many of whom have, in fact, confessed that finding desired music using search engines is trouble-free—the easiness which can be regarded as the main reason of unauthorized reproduction of music by college students.

Limitations of this research include the fact that the studied samples may not represent the whole population of the faculty's students. The present study is an explanatory test of downloading phenomenon in which new variables are introduced. Moreover, faculty's students are possible to be different from other downloading populations. Since Pew Research (2002) indicated that college students develop special reliance on internet for their social interactions and entertainments, results may be different in senior populations.

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