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Development communication and appropriation of the new ideas, services, socio-technical systems: Role of the Perceived Usage Value formation on the user side

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Study Background

- The pro-development programs efficacy depends heavily on the acceptance and the appropriation of the new ideas, services and systems by their final users. It is true for the public health problems, the environmental questions, the sustainable economic development support and many other sectors.
- Thus, the communication strategy must be well informed of the local users realities, contexts and their perceptions construction about the pro-development messages and offers. *Why would the users accept some of them and reject the others? How do they integrate these novelties into their mental and physical realities, make them their-own through the appropriation?*
- The pro-development ideas, services and systems most often serve to *transform* the social reality. Their adoption and integration process may be seen as the process of societal adoption, integration and appropriation of *innovations* (Rogers & Hart, 2002; Jouët, 1992; Bardini, 1993; Kiyindou, 2008; others).
- The acceptance and the appropriation of novelty by its users pass through the mental construction of the *sense of usage* of the given objet : its evaluation in terms of the perceived usage experience and of the functional / symbolic usage benefits, - e.g. formation of the so called *Perceived Usage Value* (PUV) (Jouët, 1987; Mallein & Toussaint, 1994; Hert, 1998; Kim & al, 2007; Mallein, 2012; others). However, there is little further investigation into this mental construction process.

Purpose of study

- 'Thick' in-depth understanding of the PUV formation and of its role within the users' appropriation and acceptance of a new pro-development offer.
- The context studied is the case of the SME supporting services (free business advising and accompanying), provided within the USAID Enterprise Development Project (EDP) to the local SMEs in the post-soviet Central Asia (Turkmenistan).
- In this particular case, the Business Advising Services (BAS) being unfamiliar to the local SME-users, the newly launched component had to overcome the low acceptance and the low engagement into this program service.

Research Question

- In case of the new SME supporting services, how the *Perceived Usage Value* is formed on the SME-users side ?
- What is the precise role of this (un-)formed PUV in the acceptance and the cognitive appropriation of the new services by the SME-users ?

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Methodology

- In-depth qualitative multi-site case study, through the iterative process of the theoretical exploration and of the field *grounded theory* research, comprising the 4 months participant observation and the in-depth interviews.

Participant observation phase

- Data sources: Pull of the SME-users data; field documentation. Field notes of four month participant observation; open interviews with SMEs and service providers on the services acceptance situations.
- Methods: Qualitative content analysis. Research-intervention for enhancing the SME-users' acceptance and engagement into the new service (value-based engaging questionnaire).

In-depth interviews

- Sample: Convenience sample of selected SME support users (EDP/ non EDP users; Advising / Financial SME support services; not-for-profit / for-profit; rejection / acceptance; à posteriori / current cases) – resulting in 10 SME organizational case studies. 2 different SME support providers were also interviewed for comparison.
- Methods: SME-users in-depth semi-directed interviewing, open-ended exploration of each service valuation-acceptation situation. After the interview guide construction and testing, the PUV formation was explored through the elaborated *Value intensity exploration technique* that completes the existing [value content/structure] *Laddering technique* (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). Qualitative lexical/thematic content analysis (Sphinx Plus² option Lexica 5.1; NVivo 9.2).

Summary of Findings

- PUV Formation:** SME-users show the PUV dimensions of value *content*, *hierarchical structure* and *intensity* (conform to Woodruff & Gardial, 1996; Woodruff, 1997). This *intensity* is motivationally bounded, - it is rather *Desired* than *Desirable* usage benefits Value.
- Thus, for each usage benefit, the Value is formed by the perceived *Instrumentality* (*correspondence*, *relative performance*) of the benefit-mean to reach the desired usage end and by the *Valence* of that end (defined as *desire* or *quasi-need importance*). The desires ('quasi-needs') are expression of needs (Nuttin, 1980 & coll.)
- The SME-users show that the *Valence intensity* comes from the motivational *Tension* (similar to Flint & al., 2002). This *Tension* is perceived by the individuals as his psychological *distance* to **two** reference points : to the *Ideal* point, but also to the *Critical* point of affairs.

- Role of PUV:** PUV appears as the essence of the anticipatory / post-usage *cognitive appropriation*, - relating *object*, *person* and *project*. For a new object, it may involve *imaginary* Instrumentality for *existing* Desired ends.
- There is a positive relationship between PUV formation and the service *acceptation* (defined here as *intention* to engage into the service), - via *Perceived Exchange Value* (PEV), also involving the *Perceived costs*.
- Moderating factors: *Knowledge* (*expertise*, *innovation propensity*), *Culture* (*cultural gap*, *acculturation strategy*), *Not-for-profit finality*, *Group dynamics* - played a mixed role.

Next Steps / Limitations

- Limits of the study: Weak generalization of results. Sample of convenience. Difficulties with the "non-desirability" value and the multi-language issues.
- Next steps: Quantitative test, testing and application in other sectors. Study of the situations of "false" valuation and of impossible individual desirability.

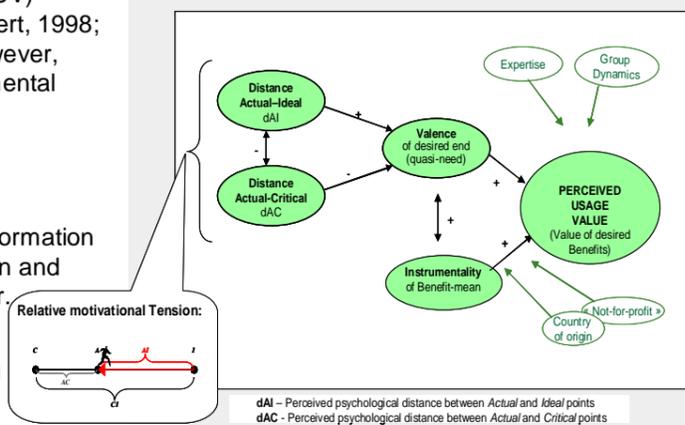
Sample Characteristics

10 SMEs ; 13 cases of valuation, 11 services (50% BAS)

- SMEs :**
- Sector: 77% services; 23% agro; 15% commerce
 - Status: 54% society; 46% entrepreneur
 - Age: 73% 5+ years old
 - Size: 46% (<10); 39% (<50); 15% (<200)
- Individuals (decision makers):**
- Gender: 70% male; 30% female
 - Age: 44.5 years average ;
 - Family: 69% married, children
 - Education: 77% higher education; experience
 - Function: 77% owners; 100% higher managers

| VALUATION CASES IN SMEs | Role of individual | Decision situation scenario : VPE before, during - Accept decision |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 : 01_EFI Advising_for-profit | Influence | YES then YES => DA : YES |
| 2 : 01_PFI Financing_not-for-profit | Deciding | YES then YES => DA : YES |
| 3 : 07_TTCH Advising_not-for-profit EDP | Deciding | YES then YES => DA : YES |
| 4 : 08_AKI b Financing_not-for-profit | Deciding | YES then YES => DA : YES |
| 5 : 09_INA a Financing_not-for-profit | Deciding | YES then YES => DA : YES |
| 6 : 09_INA b Advising_not-for-profit | Deciding | YES then YES => DA : YES |
| 7 : 02_EFE Advising_for-profit | Deciding | NO then YES => DA : YES |
| 8 : 06_AHA Advising_not-for-profit EDP | Deciding | NO then YES => DA : YES |
| 9 : 03_KHO Advising_for-profit | Deciding | YES then NO => DA : NO |
| 10 : 04_ASS Advising_not-for-profit EDP | Influence | YES then NO => DA : NO |
| 11 : 05_AYM Advising_not-for-profit EDP | Deciding | YES then NO => DA : NO |
| 12 : 08_AKI a Advising_not-for-profit EDP | Deciding | NO then NO => DA : NO |
| 13 : 10_ASA Advising_not-for-profit EDP | Deciding | NO then NO => DA : NO |

PUV Formation by SME support users



PUV and Acceptation of SME support service

