

THE ANTECEDENTS OF ATTITUDE TOWARD SOFTWARE PIRACY INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

The growth of Internet and information technology has raised the opportunities for individuals to get pirated software. The presence of software piracy can lower business investment in new product design, reduce delivery of innovative services, and suppress improvement of customer services. The exacerbation phenomenon is not likely to disappear in the future. Therefore, it evokes the attention of academia. Many researchers delve into this issue, and try to find out the influencing factors and appropriate solutions.

Among the past studies, attitude is an important or even most important predictor of software piracy intention. However, in the software piracy research, it is either treated as a single variable or explored unilaterally. Therefore, this study tries to propose a comprehensive model to explore the formation of attitude in more detail. Hence, based on the proposition of Eagly and Chaiken (1993) and related psychological theories and studies, this study proposes a comprehensive model with cognitive, affective and behavioural constructs to discuss the detailed formation of attitude toward software piracy. Besides, individuals with different personal characteristics (Thinkers vs. Feelers) form their attitude differently. Therefore, we also take personality characteristics into account.

According to the work of Eagly and Chaiken (1993), related theories and studies, this study develops the following propositions. First, in social psychology, attitude has been viewed as one of the most important and best predictor of intention. Its profound effect on piracy intention has also been found, hence, it is important to examine its effect on software piracy. Thus, the first proposition is introduced as *P1: A user's attitude has positive influence on the intention of user toward software piracy behavior.* Next, as to the cognitive process, following the suggestion of Kohlberg, we propose *P2: Perceived likelihood of punishment will lower users' attitude toward using pirated software* and *P3: A user's perceived benefit has positive influence on his/her attitude toward using pirated software.* As regard affective process, according to Kohlberg's theory and related studies, three propositions are introduced, that is, *P4: Shame is an important affective factor that can have negative influence on the attitude of users toward using pirated software,* *P5: Perceived happiness has positive influence on the attitude of users toward using pirated software* and *P6: Perceived excitement has positive influence on the attitude of users toward using pirated software.* In the final construct, behavioral process, there is one proposition is derived from the theory of self-perception. It is *P7: More piracy occurrences have positive influence on the attitude of user toward using pirated software.* At the end, the moderating effect of personality characteristics is also introduced, that is, *P8: Cognitive beliefs have stronger influence on thinkers' attitude toward software piracy than affective beliefs* and *P9 Affective beliefs have stronger influence on feelers' attitude toward software piracy than cognitive beliefs.*

This study tries to propose a comprehensive model to explore the detailed formation of attitude and the moderating effect of personal characteristics in software piracy. It provides a integrated and comprehensive model to show the important factors at the same time, and exhibits the relative importance and magnitudes of each factors vividly. It also explores the formation of individual's attitude in more detail than past studies. It examined the beliefs of cognitive process, affective process and behavioural process simultaneously. The results will provide a deeper understanding of the formation of individual attitude toward software piracy. Additionally, this study illustrates the different formation pathway for individuals with different personal characteristics respectively. This characteristic difference has rarely been discussed in related past studies. The result may be used as a plausible explanation of the incongruent findings of related studies.