Factors Influencing Student Enrollment in the Information Systems Major

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

Understanding the underlying factors in a student’s choice of the Information Systems (IS) major can greatly help business schools to attract more students into their IS programs. In order to better understand the role of students’ belief structure on their choice of major, we utilized the cognitive-based theory of planned behavior (TPB) to examine factors influencing a students’ intention to choose IS. Based on TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005), individual’s intention was determined by the attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, which are a function, respectively, of behavioral, normative, and control beliefs.

The belief measures used for TPB were based on a salient belief elicitation measure. We combined the environmental and personal factors from the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1999) with the results of the elicitation stage in a study by Chipidza et. al. (2016) to decompose the belief structure in TPB. A set of attitudinal belief and control belief dimensions were derived to conduct this study (attitudinal beliefs dimensions: competitive advantage, job opportunity, salary, personal image, difficulty, etc. and control belief dimensions: self-efficacy, facilitating resources, individual support system, etc.). Beliefs about five important referent groups of family, friends, classmates, professors, and advisors were also examined to understand their impact on individual’s subjective norm.

A sample of 120 students from both IS majors and non-IS majors were used to examine the research model. By including both IS and non-IS participants in this study, we were able to investigate the factors influencing students’ behavior and compare the factors leading to intention versus actual behavior.

The findings of this study will inform business schools, suggest several ways to attract undecided students to choose IS concentration, and provide a better understanding of personal and environmental factors influencing students’ behavior.

References


