Effective Factors in E-Learning Acceptance by English Language Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study discusses the role of technology in learning foreign language. The concept of high-tech is not just for rocket scientists anymore. It is trickling down to everyday usage, and serving a useful purpose for humanity. Electronic learning and teaching is one of the human findings that have changed our world in the environment of language teaching and learning. Technological development from 1990 leads to an increase in unity of web teaching courses and accordingly a unity in English language learning. This study is based on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and examines the role of individual, organizational and social factors in accepting E-learning technology by English language students. The investigator used descriptive-survey method and a sample of questionnaire and interview with English language students who are the target sample of the present study. In order to testify the hypothesis of the study, the investigator used Pearson coefficient and SPSS version 19.

Keywords: E-learning, Technology acceptance Model (TAM), Social factors, Organizational factors and Individual factor.

1. INTRODUCTION

As we move into the 21st century, it is becoming increasingly clear that success in our present and future academic, social, and workforce environments requires proficiency in the multiplicity of discourses represented in the varied communication systems made possible by developing technologies (Charness et al, 2001). In recent years, it becomes a fact that computers have become less visible and obvious at the same time as they have become ubiquitous. Computers often drive other types of technology, such as audio, video, and the World Wide Web. Using information technology has become one of the most prominent fields for researchers. There are a lot of studies in the similar fields which try to offer comprehensive theoretic fundamentals by the use of an explanation of determiner factors and user’s admission mechanism. Most of the researchers believe that acceptance process affect the successful use of information technology. Because of this reason, the study of the effective factors on information technology acceptance in organizations has become the focus of the scholars. (Liao, Palvia and Chen, 2009). Most of the researches done in this field in America, Australia and Europe were about technology acceptance by the users. (Al-Somail, 2009). Considering these researches, indicates that users who accept this information technology were more successful than users who didn’t accept it. Hence, several theoretic modes that include psychiatric and social sources for information technology acceptance has been demonstrated to the proponents of this field. (Venkatesh. et al, 2003). E-learning is a new method learning that offer and manage learning situations in order to improve knowledge and skill by the use of internet and computer networks and had changed the nature of education from teaching to learning. (Hallket, 2002). Regarding the effect of globalization on the number of language learners, especially English ones, knowledge expansion becomes a universal necessity and the most beneficial solution for E-learning (Faramarzian, 2003). You can shop online, you can watch TV online, and you can even book your holidays online or work online and now you can complete perfectly legitimate and recognized educational courses online. Far from being the alternative form of education used solely by working parents it is becoming just as popular with teenagers and professionals all around the world. There are no boundaries to learning when using the Internet. You can study a course that local colleges and educational institutions in your area don’t offer and you can do so without having to quit your job and leave home. You don’t need to take four years to complete a course; you can often work at your own pace, fitting in around your commitments and according to your spare time.

2. TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL (TAM)

In recent years, a number of influential models investigating intentions to adopt Technology have emerged. These models have their origins in the disciplines of Psychology, information systems and sociology (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). Among the best known of these is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). Based on the
Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), the TAM has become well established as a robust, powerful and parsimonious model for predicting employee Acceptance in the information technology domain (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was proposed for the first time by Davis in 1989 in order to do research in the field of social psychology. This theoretic model is still being used widely by researchers. TPB and TRA are two basic social psychological theories that had led to creation of TAM. Based on TRA theory, one`s work in a specific manner is determined by one`s behavioral decision in order to engaged in that activity. TPB implicates the assumption that the purpose of a person doing different activities can be predicted by the viewpoint he has toward that manner, mental norms and controlling perceived behavior of that person. TAM as a succinct, predictive and powerful model can predict and explain the behavior in decision making and acceptance of an especial technology. This model claims that one`s decision in order to use a technology depends on two special behavioral beliefs, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness is user`s conceptual expectation when using a technology in case one believes that special technology would improve his/her efficiency. Perceived ease of use is the expectation of the person about the easiness and comfort of that technology to use. Moreover, this model claims that the perceived usefulness of a technology is affected by perceived ease of use, because, the easier the usefulness, the more useful that technology would be.

TAM is based on the fact that direct use of a system is assigned by behavioral attitudes and these behavioral attitudes themselves are affected by user`s tendencies, understanding the system and its efficacy. Perceived usefulness reflects peoples’ stable belief that it would be more effective if they use technology in their works. Moreover, perceived ease of use indicates the belief of users to this point “using technology doesn’t need any special effort and difficulty” (Taylor and Todd, 1995). The advantage of this model is its accuracy and explicitness as well as its ability to predict when using information technology and this claim has proved in several studies.

2.1. Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Davis et al. (1989) defined PU as ‘the prospective user’s subjective probability that using a specific application system will increase his or her job performance within an organizational context’. Based on Adams’ definition, (Adams et al, 1998) PU is a major determinant of usage behavior and intention. Subramanian (1998) reaffirmed two belief measurements (PU and PEOU) using a new data set for two different technologies, and found PU, and not PEOU, had a direct effect on usage behavior employing technological acceptance model(TAM). In this study, we define PU as the degree to which an individual believes that use of E-learning will improve his or her learning process. Therefore, we posited that:

H1. PU will have a positive effect on technology acceptance by English language students.

2.2. Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

Linkages between PEOU, PU in TAM theory have been empirically verified in the literature. Several studies have employed different usage measures and found them consistent with TAM results, which are its two beliefs have a close correlation to technology acceptance (Burton-jones2005), (Igbaria, 1997). Many studies have also tested the effects of external variable on PEOU (Hong et al, 2002), and found such effect fully independent of PEOU (Venkatesh 2002) . Here, we define ease of use as the extent to which customer’ use of E-learning is perceived as easy or effortless. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H2. PEOU will have a positive effect on E-learning acceptance by English language students.

3. EFFECTIVE FACTORS

In this section the definition and some functions contributing Individual, social and organizational factor are provided.

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<th>Table No.1, Individual Factors</th>
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<td><strong>Individual Factors</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Job Relevance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Output Quality</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Result Demonstration</strong></td>
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Individual factors are the third set of external variables. Individual factors are not standard in previous research as they have been also known as cognitive factors (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000) and individual factors in Social Cognitive Theory (Compeau and Higgins, 1995). Individual factors such as job relevance, output quality, and result demonstrability were demonstrated to be significant determinants of technology acceptance and affect the technology acceptance through perceived usefulness (Venkatesh and Davis 2000). Result demonstrability positively influences perceived usefulness. Based on this relationship, we hypothesized a positive relationship between individual factors and perceived
usefulness and also a positive relationship between individual factors and perceived ease of use.

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<th>Table No.2, Social Factors</th>
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<td>Internalization</td>
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Social factors are also considered as external variables. Thompson et al. (1991) were interested in social factors which had a strong influence on PC utilization. Malhotra and Galletta (1999) tried to understand the role of social influences in the TAM and found that identification and internalization had a strong positive relationship with attitude toward using while compliance had a weaker negative relationship with attitude toward using. Subjective norm is influenced by both peer and superior (Mathieson, 1991; Taylor and Todd, 1995). The effect of subjective norm on technology acceptance had conflicting results. Davis et al. (1989) reported no significant relationship between social norms and usage because of the weak psychometric properties of their social norms scale and particular IS context. Mathieson (1991) found no significant effect of subjective norm on intention while Taylor and Todd (1995) found a significant effect on intention. Venkatesh and Morris (2000) showed that subjective norm had a strong influence on technology usage decisions; however the effect of subjective norm was diminished over time.

Through the TAM2, Venkatesh and Davis (2000) explained a large impact of social influence process (subjective norms, voluntariness, and image) on technology acceptance. Social influence process significantly affects the technology acceptance through perceived usefulness (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). Subjective norms are positively related to intention and moderated by experience and voluntariness, and also negatively associated with perceived usefulness and moderated by experience. Subjective norms positively influence image and image positively affects perceived usefulness. Through the UTAUT model, Venkatesh et al. (2003) confirmed that social influence was a direct determinant of intention to use.

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<th>Table 3, Organizational Factors</th>
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<td>Organization Factors</td>
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<td>Management Support</td>
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Organizational factors were considered as external variables by Igbaria et al. (1997). They examined intra organizational factors and extra organizational factors. The intra organizational factors include internal support, internal training, and management support. The extra organizational factors include external support and external training. Management and external support have more influence on technology acceptance than internal support and training in small firms (Igbaria et al., 1997). Both organizational factors have positive effects on technology acceptance through perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Igbaria et al., 1997). Facilitating conditions were also considered as organizational factors in other research. Thompson et al. (1991) did not find the effect of facilitating condition on PC utilization. Through the UTAUT (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology) model, Venkatesh et al. (2003) found the direct effect of facilitating condition on usage behavior, which was moderated by gender, age, experience, and voluntariness. In internal auditing, training is more influential on technology acceptance because auditors strongly feel that additional training would be beneficial for their job (Braun and Davis, 2003), and they do not use technologies if the company lacks qualified staff familiar with software or IT staff (ACL, 2006).

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ramazani (2012) in an article “investigation of E-learning acceptance in teaching English language based on TAM model” concluded that university students and teachers don’t benefit from ease and usefulness of E-learning technology in teaching English language environment and they refer in their study to this point that effective factors in an E-learning acceptance must be evaluated. They proposed three factors that must be estimated: individual, organizational and social. Ramazani and Allahyari (2012) in an article “Studying The Impact Of Organizational Factors In Information Technology Acceptance In Accounting Occupation By Use TAM Model (Iranian case study)” examined the impact of organizational factors on information technology.
acceptance in accounting occupation and concluded that organizational factors had positive effects on perceived usefulness by Iranian accountants and found that there is no such a positive effect on perceived ease of use. Ramazani et al. in another study “Studying The Impact Of Individual Factors In Information Technology Acceptance In Accounting Occupation By Use Of TAM Model (Iranian case study)” examined the effect of individual factors on information technology in accounting occupation and they concluded that there is no direct relationship between individual factors and perceived usefulness (there is no positive effect). Ramazani and colleagues (2012) in an another study “Examine the effect of social factors on information technology acceptance in accounting profession by using TAM model (Iranian case study)” assessed the impact of social factors on information technology acceptance in accounting profession. The results showed that there are positive effects from social factors on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness between accountants.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The objectives of this study is to explore the effective factors in E-learning acceptance base on TAM model by English language students, so the present study searches into these purposes:

1. To examine individual effects in perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.
2. To examine organizational effects in perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.
3. To examine social effects in perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.

6. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES
The researcher has five main hypotheses as follows and some secondary ones:

1. Perceived usefulness has positive effect on technology acceptance by English language students.
2. Perceived ease of use has positive effect on technology acceptance by English language students.
3. Perceived ease of use has positive effect on perceived usefulness.
4. Individual, organizational and social factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness.
5. Individual, organizational and social factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.

Sub hypotheses:

HA1: Individual factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness.
HA2: Organizational factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness.
HA3: Social factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness.

5. Individual, organizational and social factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.

Sub hypotheses:

B1: Individual factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.
B2: Organizational factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.
B3: Social factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.

7. CONCEPTUAL MODEL
The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis et al., 1989) forms the foundation of the conceptual model for the present study and includes two specific beliefs that are relevant for System Usage, namely perceived usefulness (PU), the degree to which a person believes technology acceptance would enhance his or her English learning process, and perceived ease of use (PEOU), the degree to which technology acceptance are regarded as easy to understand and operate. This is study is designed base on TAM model used by (Hyo-Jeong Kim, Michael Mannino and Robert J. Nieschwietz, 2009) in information technology acceptance in internal auditing profession titling “Information Technology Acceptance In The Internal Audit Profession: Impact Of Technology Features And Complexity”. The design follows:

Figure No.1, Conceptual model of the extended technology acceptance model
Source: Kim et al, 2009

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The testing of the model outlined above was conducted using data collected from Junior and Senior students (over 20 years of age) who were randomly selected from among students majoring English in Zanjan Azad University. Methodology used in this study is practical descriptive-
survey. Field method is used in order to gather data. Two types of data were used as research information: Primary and secondary. Secondary data were compiled by use of sources such as documentaries, books, articles, journals and websites. In order to gain primary data, a questionnaire and interview were used. The questionnaire was a Likert Scale composed of 20 items with options from completely agree to completely disagree.

9. DATA ANALYSIS
Two types of analysis were conducted over the data: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. After collecting the scores of the students in the form of raw data, they were depicted through descriptive statistics and then Pearson Coefficient was imposed to the scores of the subjects to test the hypotheses of the study and to find out whether there is any correlation between independent variables or not.

9.1 The Pearson coefficient of correlation
Karl Pearson developed a coefficient of linear correlation which demonstrates the strength of a relationship between two variables. The value of the coefficient of linear correlation is calculated by means of the following formula:

$$ r = \frac{\sum xy - \bar{x} \bar{y}}{\sqrt{\sum x^2 \sum y^2 - n \bar{x}^2}} $$

In this formula the coefficient of correlation will always have a value between -1 and +1. A value of +1 means perfect positive correlation and a value of -1 means perfect negative correlation. Finally, if the coefficient of correlation is zero, we say that there is no correlation.

As mentioned before, the Pearson correlation was used to examine the hypotheses of the study. Moreover, the findings of the present study are all based on the 95% confidence interval. In other words, all of the significant findings are significant at the 0.05 level (i.e., Alpha=0.05).

9.2 Testing Hypotheses

H1: Perceived usefulness has positive effect on technology acceptance by English language students.

According to table No.4, correlation coefficient 0.368 and p-value=0.00, the H1 is accepted with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the Perceived usefulness doesn’t have positive effect on E-learning technology acceptance by English language students.

H2: According to table No.4, correlation coefficient -0.160 and p-value=0.054, the H2 is rejected with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the Perceived ease of use doesn’t have positive effect on E-learning technology acceptance by English language students.

H3: According to table No.4, correlation coefficient 0.337 and p-value=0.00, the H3 is accepted with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the Perceived ease of use have positive effect on perceived usefulness by English language students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Perceived Usefulness</th>
<th>Perceived Ease of Use</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Hypothesis</td>
<td>System Usage</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.368</td>
<td>Accept</td>
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<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Hypothesis</td>
<td>System Usage</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>Reject</td>
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<td>Third Hypothesis</td>
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<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>Accept</td>
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$H_4$: Individual, organizational and social factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness.

$A_1$: Individual factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness.

Regarding correlation coefficient 0.476 and p-value=0.00, the hypothesis is accepted with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the individual factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness E-learning acceptance by English language students.

$A_2$: Organizational factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness.

Regarding correlation coefficient -0.248 and p-value=0.062, the hypothesis is rejected with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the organizational factors don’t have positive effect on perceived usefulness E-learning acceptance by English language students.

$A_3$: Social factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness.

Regarding correlation coefficient 0.341 and p-value=0.00, the hypothesis is accepted with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the social factors have positive effect on perceived usefulness of E-learning acceptance by English language students.

$H_5$: Individual, organizational and social factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.

$B_1$: Individual factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.

Regarding correlation coefficient 0.384 and p-value=0.00, the hypothesis is accepted with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the social factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use of E-learning acceptance by English language students.

$B_2$: Organizational factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.

Regarding correlation coefficient -0.787 and p-value=0.126, the hypothesis is rejected with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the organizational factors don’t have positive effect on perceived ease of use of E-learning acceptance by English language students.

$B_3$: Social factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use.

Regarding correlation coefficient 0.549 and p-value=0.00, the hypothesis is accepted with sig at level 0.01. So, it can be concluded that the organizational factors have positive effect on perceived ease of use of E-learning acceptance by English language students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Perceived Usefulness</th>
<th>Perceived Ease of Use</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tr>
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The effect of social factors on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use between students In terms of Management Education.

10. RESEARCH FINDINGS
Finding of this study is the result of the 80 English Language students to use E-learning as follows:

1. The effect of perceived usefulness on E-learning acceptance: These results indicate that students' intention to use E-learning because of its usefulness and Zanjani Moghaddam and Ramazani (2012) also come to the same conclusion but they had evaluated students and teachers.

2. There is no effect on perceived ease of E-learning acceptance: Implies the lack of motivation for the students' to use E-learning since they believe it is not easy to be used or they haven't understood its perceived ease of use In fact students believe that using E-learning is not easy.

3. The effect of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use: indicates that usefulness of E-learning is important and says that training centers should pay more attention to its usefulness. As studies of Straub (1997) and Gefen (2000) have also shown no amount of perceived ease of use will compensate the lack of perceived useful. Because perceived ease of use and perceived useful affects the intention and willingness of the students to use E-learning. It is therefore necessary to use advertisements and motivations influencing students' to increase their tendency toward use of E-learning.

4. The effect individual factors on perceived useful and perceived ease of use: Students consider E-learning technologies relevant to their field of study and they believe the output of using E-learning is the improvement of their academic achievement and know E-learning use to have positive outcomes. That is why the individual factors affect perceived useful and perceived ease of use of students participating in the survey.

5. Lack of effect of organizational factors on perceived useful and perceived ease of use: The results indicate a lack of instructions and training E-learning related to the topic, Education decision-makers do not have the awareness of advantages relevant to E-learning and there isn’t required support of E-learning subject and there isn’t Incentives which can motivate the students. Thus, this leads to a lack of the effect of organizational factors on perceived useful and ease of use between students.

11. CONCLUSIONS
According to the Finding of this study, the researcher in order to increase students' understanding of topic of E-learning offers the following suggestions:

2. Creating infrastructure required to set up and use E-learning in hardware and software.
4. Offering courses about advantage and usefulness in the field of E-learning in general.
5. Providing courses for E-learning process and how to employ it to teachers and students.
6. Increase in support of educational staff in subject of E-learning.

ABOUT THE CORRESPONDING AUTHOR
He is a member of the Young Researchers and Elite Club and research in the areas of Accounting Information System, Management Accounting and Information Technology. He has numerous articles in national and international journals. He is one of the top authors in Social Science Research Network (SSRN) with rank 3155. He is the fullest appreciated to his father and mother, Mr. Qudrat Ramazani and Mrs. Soghra Nagilou.
for all the hard work they have suffered throughout his life and wish them health.

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