2. Literature Review

The concept of e-learning was bron with the rise of the Internet and the popularity of electronic devices. In the era of information and globalization, pressure is put on academic institutions to integrate e-learning into their educational environment(Saade & Bahli, 2005; R.Hussein, U.Aditiawarman & N. Mohamed, Muhammad, et al. 2022). Universities all over the world have spent millions of dollars to build and maintain their e-learning systems(R.Ibrahi, 2017). E-learning has been widely applied all around the world. It is important to have more understanding of why students use e-learning to ensure its optimization.

2.1. The acceptance of e-learning in China is a topic worth researching

In developed countries, e-learning facilities and projects have been large-scale, institutionalized and relatively complete(Said A. Salloum, 2019). Researches on e-learning were growing significantly from many years ago due to e-learning’s importance and implementation at universities all over the world. Despite many researches were done, the issues and challenges of successful e-learning implementation still remains as suggested in several studies(Puteh M, 2008; Selim H M, 2007; Zhang L, 2020).

The world has indicated a lack of research on e-learning acceptance, let alone China. Actually, China is in a harder condition. As Salloum(2019) suggested, e-learning system in developing countries has partially or entirely been unsuccessfully adopted. The survey of Chinese students’ e-learning acceptance is also scarce, and very few surveys on Chinese students’ e-learning acceptance show a negative picture. This increases the uncertainty of domestic e-learning acceptance and makes it more significant to research the acceptance of e-learning in China.

2.2. Definition of e-learning and acceptance

Previous study has helped to define two key concepts in our research, namely e-learning and acceptance. E-learning is a learning method based on the use of e-media and e-devices(Shalloum, et al., 2019). It’s aim is to accept novel ways of comprehending learning and enhance availability of the training, communication and so on. The acceptance of e-learning, as Teo (2010) defined, refers to a user’s willingness to adopt and use technology for the tasks it is designed to support. In the light of Technology Acceptance Model, acceptance can be further divided into perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which respectively describe the degree to which one thinks a technology is useful and easy to use.

2.3. Gap in Existing Knowledge

Previous studies suggest a lack of researches on e-learning acceptance(Puteh M, 2008; Selim H M, 2007; Zhang L, 2020). This has been fulfilled in Chongqing University. According to our search results in CNKI and SSCI, there are no researches on the e-learning acceptance in CQU published. Our research makes up for this gap by deeply investigating the e-learning acceptance of freshmen in CQU.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Technology Acceptance Model

The technology acceptance model(TAM) will be used as the core model in the research. TAM, first proposed by Davis in 1989, is a model pertaining to technology acceptance(Shalloum, et al., 2019), often used in conjunction with questionnaire and regression analysis(https://baike.baidu.com/). It successfully applied to various e-learning platforms acceptance(Yalcin,et al. 2019) and has proved its effectiveness over many other models(Shalloum, et al. 2019).

There are two variables in this model, namely the Perceived Usefulness(U) and Perceived Ease of Use(E). Perceived usefulness describes the degree to which a person thinks the technology is useful. Perceived ease of use describes the degree to which a person thinks the technology is easy to use. The former is affected by the latter. These two variables together influence users’ attitude toward using a system(A), and then influence behavioral intention to use(BI), which finally determine the actual system use(Shallum,et al. 2019). That’s how the dependent and independent variables in TAM work with each other.

Shallum also points out that five external factors extend TAM and can influence the two external variables, which include self-efficacy, subjective norms, enjoyment, computer anxiety and experience. These variables make sense in refining U and E to help making the questionnaire.

2.4.2 Personal Interview

The personal interview will be used to deepen the understanding of the acceptance of e-learning. It’s another method often used in researching the acceptance(https://biyelunwen.yjbys.com/). Personal interview is an one-on-one conversation on a topic, aimed at collecting the respondents' views on something or the reasons for making a decision. Compared with TAM, personal interview pays more attention to the psychological factors of the subjects. It significantly eliminates the influence of many irrational factors when filling in the questionnaire.

2.5 Conclusion

The reviewed literature suggests that the wide application of e-learning and the unsuccessfully adopted e-learning system in developing countries make it worthwhile to research the acceptance of e-learning in China. In Chongqing University, there’s a lack of surveys on e-learning acceptance in freshmen. Our research makes up for this gap by deeply investigating the e-learning acceptance of freshmen in CQU.

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