**Factors influencing student acceptance and use of academic portals**

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Institutions of higher education have increasing turned to web portals as a way to attach with students. These portals are designed to provide students a central point of access to info and services. These portals give all type of information regarding class schedule, registration, advising etc. Similar to enterprise portals, most portals in higher education are made on intranets. They usually restrict access to the institution’s students, faculty, employees and other stakeholders, although some may offer limited access to the overall public.

There are many models in the literature that can explain the factors affecting in acceptance of information system in organizations. The model used in this research is one based on an adjusted Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis et al. 1989). TAM is a model based on social psychology theory and was developed specially for modeling user acceptance of information systems. The TAM specifies two beliefs, perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (EOU). Perceived usefulness is defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a specific system would increase his or her job performance. Perceived ease of use is defined as the degree to which a person trust on that using a particular system would be free from effort. Both ease of use and usefulness estimate attitude (ATT), the user’s evaluation of the desirability of using the system. Attitude along with perceived usefulness influences specific user’s behavioral intention (INT) to use the system. Finally, the intention is an analyst of actual system usage (USE). Adams et al. (1992) found that the reliability and validity of the measures of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were high.

Compatibility is a factor that is seen in several models for explanation system usage. Chen et al. (2002) observed consumer behavior in the virtual store context using an extended TAM model and found that compatibility expressively impacted attitude. They also found that compatibility was linked to perceived usefulness. Dishaw and Strong (1999) combined the TAM with the task-technology-fit, and reported that their model explained more variance than the TAM alone. Enjoyment (referred as Playfulness) is a concept often used in usage intention research. As described by Davis et al. (1992), enjoyment is the use of a system reflecting personal enjoyment for its own sake. The enjoyment that a user learns while using an intranet portal site positively influences the user’s attitude (ATT) toward using the site. In the course of this research, they attempt to identify factors which influence the adoption and use of one intranet portal by one specific group of users—students.

The target population was selected students at a single Midwest university and their use of the university’s intranet portal site. Almost 5,900 participants were enrolled over an invitation email sent out to all full and part time undergraduate and graduate students at the university. The survey was making active for a period of 2 weeks. 792 responses were gathered for a 13.4% response rate. Of these, 83 were found to be unusable (almost exclusively because of unanswered queries), resulting in a 12% usable response rate. The online survey was designed to gather the participant’s attitudes and behaviors towards using the portals.

In conclusion, this research results indicate that there is support for using an extended TAM model in explaining intranet usage within the context of a higher education setting. All hypotheses related to the original TAM model constructs were supported. With regard to hypotheses addressing the additional compatibility and enjoyment constructs. This research shows that ease of use and enjoyment are the similar. When examining the basic TAM, both ease of use and usefulness had significant impacts on attitude. (Klopping and McKinney2004; Mathieson 1991; Teo et al. 1999) found that usefulness had a stronger effect than ease of use.

This research has implications for both researchers and practitioners. For practitioners it provides some visions into how they could better develop portals. Enjoyment, eases of use, and perceived usefulness all impact attitude toward and usage of the site. Universities should evaluate ways to improve perceptions of their sites on these dimensions. Universities should also calculate functionality and information available on the site. Assessment of ease of use issues, including how well users are able to navigate the site, find information, and conduct necessary tasks, should be made. Enjoyment, ease of use, and usefulness are all factors which require attention. if the frequency and width of system usage by students was to increase.

There were some boundaries to the study. First, the study was conducted at a single university and looked at implementation of a single portal system. Second, the reporting of actual use was self-reported. Klopping and McKinney (2004) reported that self-reporting of procedure can be problematic.