CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR E-LEARNING IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT: AN IRANIAN UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

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CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR E-LEARNING IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT: AN IRANIAN UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

A project paper submitted to the College of Business in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science (Management)

Universiti Utara Malaysia

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Abstract

This study examines factors that are perceived by university students to be critical for e-learning effectiveness. The study was a cross sectional study where respondents' perceptions was measured at one point in time. 169 students around Tehran participated in this study.

Correlation analyses were conducted to test the relationship between instructor characteristics, students characteristics and information technology and e-learning system effectiveness, whereas descriptive analysis was conducted to analyze demographic characteristics of participants.

The results show that there was an association between instructor characteristics and e-learning effectiveness. The findings indicated that the role of instructor in e-learning is important in determining its success. Students' characteristics such as students’ motivation to use e-learning technology and students’ computing competency have also found to be related with e-learning effectiveness. As compared with the instructor and students’ characteristics, technology quality in terms of access, navigation, interface and the reliability and effectiveness of technology infrastructure have the highest relation to e-learning effectiveness.

In conclusion, the results from this study indicate that instructor characteristics, student characteristics and the technology have strong relationships with e-learning effectiveness.
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Finally, yet importantly, I would like to express my gratitude to all the students at Virtual Hadith Science Faculty for participating in my study. Without their sincere participation, this study will not be as successful as today.
Dedication

To my wife, Sara Aliabadizadeh, my mother, Fatemeh Yektaee, my father, Seyed Mohammad Bathaeian, and my brother, Iman.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Information technology in teaching and learning has created a need to transform how university students learn by using more modern, efficient, and effective alternative such as e-learning. According to New Report by Global Industry Analysts, Inc., e-learning has emerged as an imperative tool to impart knowledge in the academic as well as corporate sectors. Since e-learning has several advantages in terms of cost reduction, simplified training programs, flexibility and convenience; it is poised to become an integral component of information dissemination, and emerges as the new paradigm of modern education. Backed by several favorable trends, the world of e-learning market is projected to exceed US$52.6 billion by 2010 (Global Industry Analysts, 2008). It is believed that the role of e-learning and information technology in education will continue to expand in scope and complexity.

Though e-learning has been growing worldwide, it is still new in Iran. One of the driving forces of implementing e-learning in Iran is due to the vastness of the country. Iran is a big country when compare to most of the European and Asian countries. Since most of the universities are located in big cities, it is difficult for majority of Iranians to get education there. Factors such as high cost of living and difficulty to travel have made e-learning an attractive alternative in education. However, the success implementation of e-
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