


Extending TAM to Understand Library User Acceptance of E-Books in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine antecedents that influence acceptance of e-books in Tanzania. The study extended TAM model with accessibility, perceived cost, and technological support to develop a conceptual model that was used to examine acceptance of e-books in Tanzania. Quantitative study was conducted using self-administered questionnaire in which snowball technique was used to identify potential respondents. The questionnaires were distributed using online Google form, and 314 usable responses were collected. A multivariate data analysis technique known as structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to establish relationships between the hypothesized relationships. The findings show that perceived ease-of-use, accessibility, and technical support have significant effect on acceptance of e-books in Tanzania. Several implications that will lead to acceptance of e-books in Tanzania are provided.

KEYWORDS

Accessibility, E-Books, Library, Perceived Cost, Structural Equation Modelling, TAM, Tanzania, Technical Support

INTRODUCTION

Libraries serve as an important source of information to facilitate teaching and learning activities in academic and research institutions (Maitaouthong, Tuamsuk, & Tachamanee, 2012). Through libraries, learners, academicians, and researchers expect to acquire knowledge found on different related resources such as books and journals. Furthermore, studies have shown that quick access to library resources tends to accelerate teaching, consultancy and research activities (Khan & Bhatti, 2012; Khan, Bhatti, Khan, & Ismail, 2014). Therefore, to achieve academic and research institutions' missions, adequate library resources should be in place. Resources in libraries are categorized as printed and electronic resources (Besen & Kirby, 2012). Due to the development of information and communication technology (ICT), the use of electronic resources, particularly electronic books (e-books), in libraries has been proved effective and efficient (Wu & Chen, 2011). Most of the academic and research institutions have adopted e-books to facilitate learning and teaching activities.

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Previous studies have shown that the use of e-books is becoming popular in delivery of information and it is expected that will replace printed books (Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011; Lin, Tzeng, Chin, & Chang, 2010).

Several academic and research institutions in developing countries have adopted e-books as one of the electronic learning strategies. However, the adoption of e-books is considered to be slower than anticipated (Allen & Kaddu, 2014; Maduku, 2015). Studies have shown that accessibility, usability, perceived cost and lack of familiarity with e-book technology tend to limit the acceptance and adoption of e-books (Allen & Kaddu, 2014; Anuradha & Usha, 2006; Roesnita & Zainab, 2013). Furthermore, previous studies have shown that the success of e-book technology is highly depending on the library users' acceptance (Ahmad, 2015; Jin, 2014). Without an understanding of factors that influence the adoption of e-book technology, e-books could remain unnoticed and underused (Hong, Thong, & Wai-Man Wong, 2002). This study extends TAM theory with external factors that are accessibility, perceived cost and technological support to examine empirically the adoption of e-books in Tanzania.

The objectives of this study are: (1) to assess whether the identified external factors could have a significant effect on perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use of e-book technology in Tanzania; and (2) to examine if perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use could lead library users to form behavioral intentions to adopt e-book technology in Tanzania. This study is useful in the following ways. First, it addresses the existing knowledge gap on factors that could influence the adoption of e-books technology among library users particularly in developing countries. Second, the implications of the study could assist policymakers and practitioners in academic and research institutions in better understanding how to integrate e-book technology into their curriculum, hence increase the adoption of e-book technology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Need for E-Books in Academic and Research Institutions

Technological developments have changed the nature and means used to access digital contents and has opened up new opportunities for the publishing industry (Vasileiou, Hartley, & Rowley, 2009). Renear and Salo (2003) have noted, "book-like electronic reading, in particular, is a rapidly growing commercial phenomenon, with a wide variety of devices, software, and distribution systems, and a wide range of content genres." The adoption of e-books for e-learning possess significant consequences for academic libraries, including acquisition policies, discovery, pricing and licensing, downloading and printing, and cataloguing processes (Bakkalbasi & Goertzen, 2015; Vasileiou et al., 2009).

The use of printed books in libraries has been considered ineffective and inefficient. This is due to the fact that a large number of printed copies are required to be in the library in order to serve large numbers of library users (Renner, 2009). This could be difficult because the number of learners in most of the universities, particularly in developing countries, has recently increased (Burnett, 2013). Furthermore, printed books require large physical spaces for storage and may not be accessible for 24 hours (Renner, 2009; Roesnita & Zainab, 2013). Also, printed books may be misplaced, degrade or otherwise lost or stolen, which may requires the library to purchase new copies of the same book (Anuradha & Usha, 2006; Roesnita & Zainab, 2013). This tends to be difficult since most libraries have limited financial resources (Burnett, 2013; Mcharazo & Olden, 2016). The evolution of e-book technology could address these challenges by providing a more versatile and flexible mechanism for learners to access and use library resources. A study conducted by Mcharazo and Olden (2016) recommends the use of electronic resources in libraries to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

Academic libraries have traditionally played an important role in providing access to and disseminating information across learning and research communities. That role has extended to facilitating access to electronic resources such as e-journals and e-books through innovative technologies. Electronic journals have been used by scholars and professionals for more than a decade

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