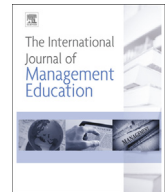


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Research Notes

The effect of electronic learning systems on the employee's commitment

Batool Zareie ^a, Nima Jafari Navimipour ^{b, *}^a Department of Information Technology Management, Mizan University, Tabriz, Iran^b Department of Computer Engineering, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

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ABSTRACT

E-learning as a popular learning approach utilized by many organizations has become an important trend in recent years. It generally refers to the use of computer network technology, primarily over an intranet or through the Internet, to deliver information and instruction to individuals. It allows training to reach diverse and geographically dispersed workforces in a cost-efficient manner, and can take place on-demand and at a lesser cost than on-site training. Also, employee commitment is a dominant source of competitive advantage of many organizations and thus, has been drawn to its reported ability to solve intractable organizational challenges. Therefore, this study aimed to discuss the relationship between e-learning systems and employees commitment. The target samples of this study are the employees of the Islamic Azad University (the world's third largest university), Tabriz branch. For statistical analysis of questionnaires, we have used of the SMART-PLS 2.0 software package. Findings from the study confirmed the validity of the proposed model for employee's commitment assessment. In addition, the results showed that the four variables, learner's satisfaction, 24/7 access to training materials, personalized learning, and efficiency, significantly influenced employee's commitment.

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1. Introduction

The importance of the Internet as an information hub to facilitate data transfer and sharing has increased dramatically in the last decade because of its convenience in accessing both professional services and entertainment (Jafari Navimipour & Sharifi Milani, 2015). Integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into educational environments has made important contributions to learning processes. A key development in the use of ICT in higher education has been the increased use of the Internet and e-mail communications: in some instances, this has led to the adoption of virtual learning environments (Marriott, Marriott & Selwyn, 2004). In a knowledge and information society, e-learning has built on the extensive use of advanced information and communication technologies to deliver learning and instruction (Jafari Navimipour & Zareie, 2015a; 2015b). This technology has accelerated developments in e-learning environments and their individualization (Özyurt & Özyurt, 2015). Prior literature utilized e-learning as an umbrella term to describe teaching and learning activities using the information and communication technologies (Islam, 2016). Also, e-learning as a common use of internet and social networks utilizes electronic communication for learning and teaching from a distance (Zareie & Jafari

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: jafari@iaut.ac.ir (N. Jafari Navimipour).

Navimipour, 2016). Internet learning environment changed the way of people learning (Dahalan, Hassan & Atan, 2012). E-learning is a tool used to transfer the delivery, teaching or programs by means of electronic devices like computer, mobile phone, I-pads, tablets, and etc., as another word the institutions using e-learning courses will enlarge and enhance their combination of offering courses (Venkataraman & Sivakumar, 2015). E-learning is emerging as a popular learning approach utilized by many organizations (Jia, et al. 2011) and it is defined as a broad array of applications and processes that share a common feature of relying on some type of computer technology to promote learning (Bell & Federman, 2013). In addition, it can be defined as a way of learning in which teaching activities uses the Internet and digital contents for effective learning of students (Jafari Navimipour & Zareie, 2015a, 2015b). Recent research in e-learning has highlighted the need to define novel and advanced support mechanism for commercial and academic organizations in order to enhance the skills of employees and students to increase the overall competitiveness in the new economy world (Acampora, Gaeta & Loia, 2011).

Also, many organizations believe that employee commitment is a dominant source of competitive advantage and thus, has been drawn to its reported ability to solve intractable organizational challenges such as decreasing turnover rates and increasing productivity (Shuck, Reio & Rocco, 2011). The last two decades have witnessed the phase of transition from 'satisfied' employees to 'committed' employees who are not predisposed to attrition, rather immersed in the goal and success of their organization and often serve as the force behind organizational success. Employee engagement or employees commitment is often associated with other organization related concepts such as employees satisfaction (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015). Employee commitment practice is a broad term used by the human resources of an organization to actualize employee's performance and their commitment to the vision of the organization. It is believed that engagement is „one step up“ from commitment; it is clearly in the organization's interests to understand the drivers of engagement. It can be defined as the level of involvement an employee has towards their organization and its values. An organization's capacity to manage employee commitment is also reflected in business success (Singh & Shukla, 2012) and it improves company performance. Managers unequivocally agree that this century demands more efficiency and productivity than any other times in history. Employers now realize that by focusing on employee commitment, they can create more efficient and productive workforce (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010) because employees are the important assets of organizations and play a significant role in their success (Navin, Navimipour, Rahmani & Hosseinzadeh, 2014; Navimipour, 2015; Navimipour, Rahmani, Navin & Hosseinzadeh, 2015a; 2015b). As e-learning has been expanding, however, so have debates about its effectiveness and concerns about its impact on the employee's commitment. Therefore, this study examines how to improve employee commitment using e-learning and the objectives of this study are as follows:

- Investigating the usefulness of e-learning for employees and increasing the employees' commitment;
- Highlighting the role of electronic learning in organizational success;
- Improving job performance through e-learning.

The paper proceeds as follows. In Section 2, we present the literature review. Section 3 presents the study design and hypothesis. Section 4 is dedicated to the research method. Section 5 presents the findings and discussion. Finally, conclusions are provided in Section 6.

2. Literature review

The Internet and web services as an information hub facilitate information and data transferring and sharing (Charband & Jafari Navimipour, 2016; Navimipour, Rahmani, Navin & Hosseinzadeh, 2015a; 2015b). Today's society emerged as a result of a transformation from an industrial era to a knowledge era, leaving room for the creation, collection, and use of knowledge (Gagnon, et al. 2015). The use of technology in education and organizations, commonly defined as e-learning, has become a standard component in many courses. Technology applications are not limited to the classroom – they are also placing some classroom sessions with virtual sessions or fully replacing classroom courses with online courses (Tîrziu & Vrabie, 2015). Distance learning and electronic learning has been a valuable alternative to classroom teaching for decades (Huang, Lin & Huang, 2012b). In the Canadian Council on Learning's recent report was stated that e-learning is “the development of knowledge and skills through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly to support interactions for learning – interactions with content, with learning activities and tools, and with other people” (Tîrziu & Vrabie, 2015). Staff development and improving job status done through training is concerned as important parts of HRM in the third-millennium organizations (Fadaiyan, Reshadatjoo, Zahir & Golestanesh, 2015) and their management is an important challenge in any system and organization (Ashouraie, Jafari Navimipour, Ramage & Wong, 2015; Jafari Navimipour, Masoud Rahmani, Habibizad Navin & Hosseinzadeh, 2014). The development of a learning culture in an organization involves the continuous education of its members (Gagnon, et al. 2015). As learning professionals, we know the importance of learning on employee's commitment and turnover. Studies carried out by various researchers have highlighted the positive effect of training on various work-related outcomes for improving organizational performance and on the commitment level of employees (Dhar, 2015). Achieving employee commitment is essential (Lam, O'Donnell & Robertson, 2015) and the knowledge of the factors that influence employee's commitment in their electronic learning systems possibly provides teachers important information to design, develop, and finally distribute more effective distance learning courses. E-learning systems support the needs of the new workforce and drive employee's commitment in a number of ways:

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