UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

DETERMINANTS AND IMPACTS OF DIGITAL LIBRARY USAGE:
A SURVEY AMONG SELECTED IRANIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

In the age of information, digital library (DL) adoption among Iranian universities and academic higher learning institutions has been very common. It is no longer considered as a lavish technological investment, but rather treated as technological need and necessity crucial to the survival of the university. Various studies have revealed that universities and academic higher learning institutions have benefitted from the installation of the digital libraries. In an academic environment, DL usage is purely volitional or optional. Innovative users would effectively use the DL for some specific reasons and objectives, while others may simply ignore it. This situation simply suggests that there are some determining factors that shape the usage behavior of the users. Given that digital libraries (DL) have been implemented in most Iranian universities and academic higher learning institutions, knowledge regarding users' usage behavior is still very limited. Not much is really known about the extent users; especially students exploit the DL for the purpose of enhancing their performance and productivity. Similarly, little is really known about the factors that shape Iranian students' DL usage behavior from users' lenses. To this effect, this study is aimed to investigate the usage behavior of users in a DL environment in selected Iranian universities. In addition, it is also aimed at investigating the determinants of DL usage behavior. Finally, this study also intends to investigate the impact of DL usage behavior among users. The conduct of this study was using a quantitative approach. Three universities were involved in the study, namely University of Tehran, Tehran University of Medical Science and Sharif University of Technology. These universities were chosen because they are the top three biggest universities in Iran. On top of that, DLs have been implemented in these universities for more than ten years. Preliminary studies involving interviews, observation and review of materials (i.e., the DL itself) were undertaken to understand the phenomenon of DL usage and its corresponding determinants and impacts. The findings of the studies were then used to refine the theoretical framework and the corresponding testable hypothesis. In order to test the hypotheses, a self-administered questionnaire was disseminated to a population which consisted of DL users in the three participating academic libraries. A convenience sampling technique was adopted so as to ascertain that respondents were well represented by various departments. A total of 750 valid responses were analyzed to test the developed hypotheses. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach was used to analyze the data. The findings suggest that DL use has a significant relationship with individual performance. In addition, it was also found that technological characteristics are also significant predictors of DL use. Among the four dimensions of individual characteristics, the study found that only attitude towards DL as significant predictor. The findings of the study can viewed from both theoretical and practical perspectives. From the theoretical viewpoint, it has developed an empirical based framework depicting the determinants and impacts of DL use. From the practical viewpoint, the developed instrument can be used to gauge the performance of the DL.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one provides an overview of the entire research. In this chapter, the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, and research objectives, overview of research model, context and scope of study, overview of research methodology, significance, and limitation of the research are presented. Figure 1.1 depicts the outline of Chapter one.
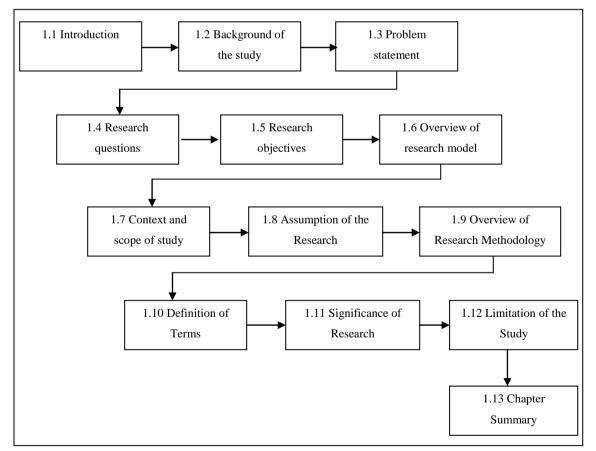
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Figure 1.1: Outline of Chapter One