



# Understanding e-learning continuance intention in the workplace: A self-determination theory perspective

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## Abstract

Based on self-determination theory (SDT), this study proposed an extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in the context of e-learning service. In the proposed model perceived usefulness, perceived playfulness and perceived ease of use are predicted to be influenced by perceived autonomy support, perceived competence and perceived relatedness. Although TAM has received fairly extensive attention in prior research, this study is one of the first to examine the effects of motivational factors affecting TAM constructs. The results show that applying SDT to e-learning in a work setting can be useful for predicting continuance intention.

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## 1. Introduction

Over the last years, Information Technology (IT) has provided several advantages for the business and social domains. Internet, and specially the World Wide Web, has become an essential tool for both fields. Users' acceptance is the most important determinant of

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continuance intentions when using any technology. We can find several theoretical models that were proposed to explain and predict individuals' attitudes and acceptance of Information Systems (IS). The most well-known are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and its extension, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991), and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Davis, 1989; Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). These models have dominated the research on individual adoption of IS in organizations and have contributed great knowledge to this research issue. TAM, adapted from TRA, posits that the most important determinants of the individual's acceptance of IT are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

In a later study, Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1992) introduced perceived enjoyment in the model as an intrinsic motivation and defined perceived usefulness as an extrinsic motivation. Other IS researchers have also distinguished the effects of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on the individual's acceptance of IT (Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000; Igbaria, Parasuraman, & Baroudi, 1996; Shang, Chen, & Shen, 2005; Teo, Lim, & Lai, 1999; Venkatesh, 1999, 2000; Venkatesh & Speier, 1999). Recent findings in intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy research indicate that playfulness (Hsu & Chiu, 2004a; Liu & Arnett, 2000; Moon & Kim, 2001; Webster & Martocchio, 1992) and computer self-efficacy (Agarwal, Sambamurthy, & Stair, 2000; Chau, 2001; Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Venkatesh & Davis, 1996) also play important roles in determining a user's behavioral intention and actual usage.

Since perceived usefulness and perceived playfulness are motivational factors, we propose to introduce antecedent variables that are likely to have an influence on the type of motivation that e-learning users are likely to adopt and how these different types of motivation will influence intentions to continue using e-learning. That is, how do organizational factors such as supervisors support, top management support and work environment affect users' acceptance? A potentially useful theoretical framework for understanding these critical questions is self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985a, 1991, 2000), a theory of human motivation that proposes a multidimensional conceptualization of motivation and an associated model of individual and contextual antecedents. SDT distinguishes between different types of motivation based on the different regulations that give rise to an action.

This study contributes to the technology acceptance literature by examining the relationships between SDT and TAM variables in the same model. We propose to examine the effects of the motivational determinants on TAM constructs using SDT as the background theory. Thus, we introduce perceived autonomy, perceived competence and perceived relatedness as determinants of perceived usefulness, perceived playfulness and perceived ease of use.

## 2. Theoretical background and research model

### 2.1. Technology acceptance model

Davis adapted TAM from TRA to predict user's acceptance of IT and introduced two important constructs, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Davis (1989, p. 320) defined perceived usefulness as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his/her job performance". Perceived ease of use is defined as

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