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## FACTORS AFFECTING THE INTENTION TO USE BLOG BY STUDENTS AT SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to investigate factors affecting the intention to use blog and ease of its use at secondary and tertiary educations. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989) has been adopted in designing the theoretical framework for the study. This framework is applied to examine the significant differences between level of study related to factors affecting the intention to use blog namely the academic benefits, the social benefits, and ease of its use. One hundred students completed the survey questionnaire and responses to the 24 items were analysed. The results suggest that only one factor ( the academic benefits) was found to have a significant influence on the intention to use blog. In addition it was also found that there is a significant difference between perceived academic benefits of blogging at school and university levels of education.*

**Keywords:** Blog, Acceptance Model, Academic Benefits.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet is changing the academic world and social life with newer, faster and better ways to do things online. For most secondary school and nearly all university students nowadays, they could not picture life without internet - it is an essential need in enhancing the ability to, blog, network, conduct research and even reconnecting with people across the globe.

Social networking is a huge factor when it comes to the World Wide Web. Communication through social networking sites, with the wide spread of communication technology has become a common tool in society. Blog is an example of social networking website that provides user friendly interface and accessibility to write and communicate. Many blogs are available for free such as BlogSpot, WordPress, Blogger, Posterou Spaces and Bloetry.

A blog is defined as a web application and provides a two-way communication which shows comment features that promote readers to attend in discussion with other readers by attaching a post to the entry (Throne & Payne, 2005). Thus, blogs are useful not only for sharing information

and communication but also for enhancing teaching and learning (T n L) activities involving multimedia features. In the classroom, students can create a personal blog and space to read, write and share their ideas. Students can also post questions and answers to engage in learning and social cohesion (Huffaker, 2006).

Thus, blogs allow students to search for information, communicate and express their opinion with others. Students also have the opportunities to share academic forum and related interest. Blogs have a lot of features that help students to customize their designs without the programming knowledge and make it easy to create a professional-looking interface. Students can choose from various different background images, flexible layouts, add gadgets such as slideshows, changing fonts and colors (Farmer, Yue & Brook, 2008). In addition, students can post text, photos, and videos. Further, they can embed their voice or podcast to their blogs through soundcloud.com.

Simple-to-use interface allows users to customize their blog without understanding the html coding (hypertext markup language). Blog help students to link to other blogs and resources which help students to enhance their learning (Shih, 2010).

## **2. ACADEMIC BENEFITS OF BLOGGING**

Based on the elaboration of blog features and its characteristic, this section discusses some useful results relating to blogging for the academic networking purposes. Deng and Yuen (2012) found that both teachers and students tend to benefit most when using blogging, during which information and ideas were shared. Blogging also allows others to comment or respond to postings from others. This feedback had helped bloggers to be aware about how they are expressing themselves and to learn from each other. Hence, blogs can be used as a tool to monitor and assess students' work and motivate interaction among students and teachers. Studies have also shown that blogging engaged many students to read extensively (Rodzvilla, 2002).

Students can submit their paper reviews, peer feedback, comments, reactions and etc via blogging. Generally, blog is used as an effective and helpful instrument to improve student learning with the course subject (William & Jacob, 2004). In addition to support how blogging can help students and teachers in education, another study is reviewed. William and Jacob (2004) did a research in Brisbane collage at Queensland University of technology that tried to use blog in their courses. It was reported that students perceived a lot of benefits from blogging. The findings showed that 77 percent of the students involved in this study agreed that blogging enhanced the level of intellectual exchange between students.

## **3. SOCIAL BENEFITS OF BLOGGING**

Blogs and their links provide spaces for public communication which can be referred as 'blogosphere'. People can communicate and have free speech (Tremayne, 2007). However, in the Malaysian context, freedom of speech must also address the sensitivity and cyber ethics issues especially related to politics and culture. Some blog sites are open to the public and viewers can give comments or post messages and share their information and ideas. Students like to get more involved than they do in other academic and web-based environments. Many studies have shown that blogging has social benefits for students. Caruso (2004) conducted a study and revealed that

41.2 percent of the students in the University of Wisconsin like and prefer to use technology in the classroom. Caruso(2004) also found that using blog helps students to have better communications with instructors and their friends. This study also showed that 93.4 percent of students who participated in the study communicate through chatting and even sharing ideas. Blogging therefore helps student to have take part in a social atmosphere for intellectual social discourse.

#### **4. EASE OF USE AND INTENTION TO USE OF BLOGGING IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ACCEPTANCE THEORY**

Blog has a very simple interface which allows students or users to easily maneuver the site without any high end techniques. Thus, anyone who knows a little basic Microsoft Word document can create and maintain a blog.

Ease of use of blogging and its accessibility show that these social networking applications have a potential to share individual student learning (Philip & Nicholls, 2007). The platform of blogging is easy for students to read other's posts and to add their comments. Students can post videos and pictures or link to other blogs and these features of blogs make it easy to use. As mentioned earlier, blog is technically easy to use and it does not need much effort to create and maintain it.

Many models have been developed to examine user's intention toward technology. One of these theories and models is called Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), originally proposed by Davies in 1989. In his Model, Davis suggested some factors that might affect intention to use of technology. Factors that were found to have affected technology acceptance include: perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived usefulness (PU) and attitude toward use (ATT). Perceived ease of use is defined as the degree to which an individual believes that using the technology would be free of effort. Perceived usefulness is defined as the degree to which each person believes that using technology would enhance his or her learning performance. Attitude toward usage is defined as the degree to which a person associates and evaluates the target system and technology with her or his job (Davis, 1998).

Many studies have been conducted to support the impact of some factors on intention to use of technology such as blogs. Delone (2003) conducted a study and explained some factors such as information and knowledge quality, system quality, service quality, student satisfaction have affected the intention to use of blogging among university students.

Most of the teachers used traditional method to teach in the classroom and students utilize that traditional way to learn. However, blogging is growing rapidly at different levels of educational setting and sharing information becomes easier. Many studies have been done on the benefits of blogging and many researchers have discussed about the use of blogs as learning tools in higher education. Students were found to reveal their satisfaction on the usefulness and benefits of blogs in learning (Williams & Jacob, 2004). However, there is lack of research about students' perception related to the use of blogs (Hourigan & Murray, 2012).

The present study has been designed to address the following research questions:

- i) Is there any difference between levels of study related to the following factors:
  - Academic benefits of blogging,

- Social benefits of blogging,
  - Blogging ease of use?
- ii) To what extend do academic, social benefits and ease of use in blog affect intention to use among students?

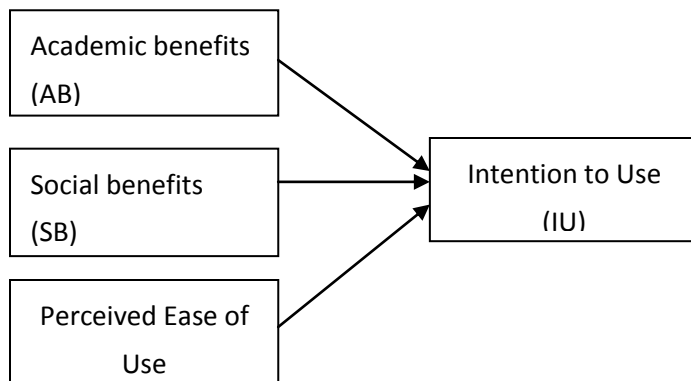
The focus of the study is underpinned by the conceptual framework elaborated in the following section.

## 5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this technology age, using educational technology such as blog contributes to the social and academic benefits for students. Therefore, intention to use of this technology is an important factor to be studied.. In this study, the focus relates to the model that adapted from Davis (1989). Previous literature review in this paper explained the factors that affect on intention to use and acceptance of technology According to Davis, perceive usefulness, and ease of use and attitude toward technology affect the technology acceptance. The adapted model is shown in figure1.

The academic benefits applied in this study had been treated in accordance with Williams and Jacobs (2004) which they define as advantages of blogging that are educational in nature and related to school and university content. Ghazisaeedi (2012) refers social blogging as students' forming connections and communication with the outside world. Ease of use benefits relates to respondent's views about how technically easy blogging is and how much effort it requires(adapted from Davis,1989). On the other hand, intention to use is defined as respondent's view about the intention to use blogging (adapted from Davis, 1998). Based on the research theoretical framework that adapted from Davis model (1998), this study aimed to examine academic, social benefits of blogging and its ease of use among school and university students and also investigate the effects of each factors on intention to use of blogging.

**Figure-1.**Adapted from (Davis, 1989) Model.



## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In nature, this study was a quantitative research, employed a survey method. The questionnaire in this study was designed according to research questions. Through this questionnaire, the researcher investigated the school and university students' perceptions of academic and social

benefits of blogging, ease of use and intention to use of blog. The data in this study were collected from a convenient sampling drawn from one Iranian school and a Public university. They are located in Kuala Lumpur. From 150 students, only 100 samples responded.

A total of 24 questions and demographic information have been constructed and divided to four main categories: academic benefits, social benefits of blogging, its ease of use and intention to use blog.

There were 26 questions to measure all the variables including demographic information. The level of students' agreement was measured from 5-Likert scale indicating the level of their agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree(5) with (3 )as not sure. The researcher has utilized descriptive statistics to reveal the breakdown of demographic information. ANOVA (analysis of variance) with Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) were also adopted to address the research questions.

## 7. RESULTS

### 7.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 50 (26 males and 24 females) students in school and 50 (16 males and 34 females) students in the university responded to the questionnaires, respectively. The samples indicate 61.9% males in school and 38.1% males in university. While the number for female students in school and university is 24(41.4%) and 34(58.6%), respectively. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the results.

**Table- 1.** Study Samples

			level		
			School	university	Total
gender	Male	Count	26	16	42
		% within gender	61.9%	38.1%	100.0%
	Female	Count	24	34	58
		% within gender	41.4%	58.6%	100.0%
Total	Count		50	50	100
	% within gender		50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

**Source:** Questionnaire Survey, 2013

Based on the 5-Likert scale, the mean of all items are above the anchor point (3.0). The highest mean (3.90) with the SD of .772 is found in item 1, the intention to use of blog (I would like to enhance my learning using blog). While, the lowest mean (3.19) with SD of .918 is in item 4 of dimension social benefits of blogging (Blogging brings me closer to my lecturers). This result shows that the students have intended to use blog in order to enhance their learning. The detailed information of the items in the questionnaire are revealed in Table 2.

### 7.2 The difference between level of study and academic and social benefits of blogging and its ease of use

One way between-group analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the differences between levels of study related to the following factors namely, academic, social benefits of

blogging and its ease of use. Participants were grouped according to their level of study (school students and university students).

Based on the descriptive analysis, there were differences observed between the means. Table 3 shows that academic benefits at school level has achieved the highest mean score (mean =  $X = 3.7733$ ,  $SD = .43612$ ) followed by ease of use at university level (mean =  $X = 3.7233$ ,  $SD = 0.52230$ ) and social benefits at school level (mean =  $3.6133$ ,  $SD = .58944$ ). The one way between group analysis of variance show that there is a statistically difference at  $p < .05$  level in academic benefits of blogging for both school and university students (Mean,  $X = 3.7733$ ,  $p = .011$ ). While, the  $p$  significant level in social benefit and ease of use of blogging is more than 0.05. These two factors have  $p$  significant level of .892 and .150, respectively. This result shows that only one factor that is the academic benefits is significantly different. The procedure of information is revealed in the Table 4

**Table- 2.** Means and Standard Deviations Of the Intention to Use Blog

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gain a lot of information about different topics	3.80	.752
Help homework.	3.32	.851
Comments of other bloggers.	3.78	.848
Writing skills.	3.79	.856
Get feedback.	3.50	.969
Think clearly.	3.66	.855
enhances my communication	3.62	.908
Global audience.	3.75	.936
New relationships.	3.60	.888
Closer to my lecturers.	3.19	.918
create friendships	3.80	.853
Connects with friends.	3.67	.888
user-friendly	3.70	.732
Quickly created.	3.69	.907
Convenient	3.70	.772
little effort.	3.46	.881
Updated easily.	3.64	.785
technically easy.	3.70	.905
enhance learning	3.90	.772
upload videos	3.66	.781
upload pictures	3.66	.807
share information	3.68	.898
enhance my communication	3.53	.858
get feedback	3.51	.859

**Note:** N=100

**Source:** Questionnaire Survey, 2013

**Table- 3.** The Descriptive Statistics based on the Academic Benefits

		Mean	Std. Deviation
academic	school	3.7733	.43612
	university	3.5100	.56985
	Total	3.6417	.52190
Social	school	3.6133	.58944
	university	3.5967	.63807
	Total	3.6050	.61118
Ease	school	3.5733	.51083
	university	3.7233	.52230
	Total	3.6483	.51948

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2013

**Table- 4.** Results from ANOVA

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
academic	Between Groups	1	1.734	6.733	.011
	Within Groups	98	.257		
	Total	99			
social	Between Groups	1	.007	.018	.892
	Within Groups	98	.377		
	Total	99			
ease	Between Groups	1	.563	2.108	.150
	Within Groups	98	.267		
	Total	99			

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2013

### 7.3 The effects of academic and social benefits of blogging and its ease of use on the intention to use blogging

The multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used to see the effects of academic and social benefits of blogging and its ease of use on intention to use of blog. Academic benefits was significantly affect Intention to use at significant level of  $p < 0.05$ . It has affected the intention to use with  $\beta = 0.361$  and  $p = .001$ . Whereas, social benefits with  $\beta = 0.98$  and  $p = .376$  and ease of use with  $\beta = 0.99$  and  $p = .321$  did not have significant effect on intention to use of blogging. The result is revealed in table 5 and table 6

**Table- 5.** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.458 <sup>a</sup>	.209	.185	.47145

a. Predictors: (Constant), ease, academic, social

**Table- 6.** Coefficients (a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	1.675	.427		3.927	.000
	academic	.361	.104	.361	3.481	.001
	social	.084	.094	.098	.889	.376
	ease	.100	.100	.099	.997	.321

a. Dependent Variable: intention

## 8. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

There are 42 male and 58 female school and university students responded to this study. In summary, the results showed that only one variable (academic benefits) tend to influence the intention to use blogging. This result seems to be paralleled with the results forwarded by Hourigan and Murray(2010). The other variables namely, social and ease of use, were found to show no influence on the intention to use blogging. The results contradicted the explanation given in the Acceptance Model. The trend of using blog in future is based on its benefit on the academic purposes from this study. This could be due to the technical accessibility and writing is made possible to anyone who does not programming. Blog, thus can be used for assessment and writing portfolios although blog is difficult to make comments and to secure effective communication as compared to Facebook or any other social networks. For this reason, it could affect the way the students perceive the intention to use blog in future.

In addressing the issue of level of studies between school and universities, it was found a significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the level of study and the academic benefits of blogging. The school students perceived highly on the academic benefits (Mean score is 3.7733) as compared to university students (mean score is 3.5100). Both social benefit and ease of use seemed similar across level of studies. This could be due to the popularity of blogging since it is widely used at school level as compared to at the University level.

The findings from this study should help students to share the benefits of learning method where students were able to communicate with their teachers and classmates through blogging for academic purposes. In addition, the study is significant to teachers to use blog as a tool to enrich their teaching method. Besides that, this study is also significant for school teachers, university lecturers and department of education to monitor student's work and assignment through the use of blog. The findings could be used in designing guidelines in the implementation of blog as an important teaching and learning tools at both school and university levels. The use of blog is also suggested to be one of the activities that could be integrated by teachers in the course outline. Blogging will not fade away despite the rise of other social networking sites such as Facebook and twitter as blogging is particularly relevant in enhancing the academic work, writing and assessment.



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