ELECTRONIC MAIL ACCEPTANCE EVALUATION BY EXTENDED TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL AND MODERATION EFFECTS OF ESPOUSED NATIONAL CULTURAL VALUES BETWEEN SUBJECTIVE NORM AND USAGE INTENTION[1]

Savaş MUTLU

Hacettepe University, Business Administration Department,
06800 Ankara, Turkey
E-mail: smutlu@hacettepe.edu.tr

Azize ERGENELİ

Hacettepe University, Business Administration Department,
06800 Ankara, Turkey
E-mail: ergeneli@hacettepe.edu.tr

Abstract. The aim of the study is to test the Extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM2) for electronic mail (e-mail) acceptance in a Turkish iron and steel company and to investigate the moderation effects of Espoused Natıonal Cultural Values (ENCV) (i.e. Individualism/Collectivism (IC), Masculinity/Femininity (MF), Uncertainty Avoidence (UA) and Power Distance (PD)) between Subjective Norm (SN) and e-mail Usage Intention (UI). In addition, the direct effect of power distance on e-mail usage intention was investigated. The research included 286 white-collared participants. The Statistical Package and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) programmes were used for statistical analysis. In the result of the study, the Perceived Ease Of Use (PEOU) and subjective norm were found as determinants of e-mail usage intention, PEOU was found as a strong determinant of Perceived Usefulness (PU) and power distance had a negative direct effect on e-mail usage intention but moderated positively the relation between subjective norm and e-mail usage intention.

JEL classification: J00, J01, J08.
Keywords: E-mail Usage, Espoused National Cultural Values, Extended Technology Acceptance Model.
Reikšminiai žodžiai: elektroninio pašto naudojimas, palaikomos kultūrinės vertybės, išplėstas technologijų palankumo modelis.

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[1] The first version of this study was presented at the international scientific conference 'Practice and Research in Private and Public Sector'-26-27 April 2012, Vilnius.

1. Introduction

The use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) systems in organisations is growing rapidly and most of those systems are conveying e-mail. People usually evaluate the use of systems from technical point of view. However, such systems used in organisations should be investigated in terms of other aspects (i.e acceptance and organisational behaviour). The aim of this study was to approach e-mail acceptance from different aspects.

2. Theories Related to Media Choice

According to Wijayanayake and Higa (1999, p.330), theories related to media choice are: media richness theory, social influence theory and social context theory. Lee and Varey (1998, p .321) also included media symbolism theory. Those four theories will be explained below.

Media richness theory was proposed by Lengel and Daft (1988). Within the context of theory, communication channels are listed according to: the amount of conveyed information, feedback and personal focus (Daft et al., 1987, p.359).

In social influence theory, it is believed that media choices of individuals are affected by peers and superiors. According to this theory, the use of information technologies for communication purposes is the result of some complex social interactions (Wijayanayake and Higa, 1999, p.330).

The social context theory was proposed by Sproull and Kiesler (1986). According to this theory, communicators perceive social context of communication by means of static and dynamic cues. Static cues are appearance of people and artifacts (i.e. private office, big desk, etc.), dynamic cues are non-verbal elements (Sproull and Kiesler, 1986, p.1495).

According media symbolism theory meaning of a message is not limited to words in its content only, but also involves the media that was selected to convey it. Preference of a communication media is also a communication (Richardson and Smith, 2007, p. 479). Media choice might have symbolic meanings. According to this point of view, media is an important part of the message. For example, letters may represent formality and meetings may symbolise desire for team work. In previous researches e-mail represented low priority (Trevino *et al.*, 2000, p.167).

3. Extended Technology Acceptance Model

The technology acceptance model (TAM) was adapted from theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein ve Ajzen, 1975) by Davis (1989). According to TRA, behavior happens after belief, attitude and intention (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p.16). In TRA, intention is at the center. Intention is an indicator of how people desire to perform a

behavior and how much effort they plan to spend on that. Intention can transform into a behavior only if an individual has a control, in other words, an authority to realise. Transformation of intention into behavior depends on resources (time, money, skills etc.) and opportunities (Ajzen, 1991, p.182).

TAM offers a sound explanation as to the user acceptance and user behaviour (Venkatesh and Morris, 2000, p.116). There are four determinants of TAM: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, usage intention and usage (Lee *et al.*, 2003, p.759). Perceived usefulness is the degree of one's belief that using a system will improve their work performance. Perceived ease of use is the degree of one's belief that using a system doesn't require much effort (Davis, 1989, p.320). By adding a subjective norm, the technology accepetence model (TAM) has been extended to TAM2. Subjective norm is related to one's perception about the referent people's opinions on their way of performing behaviour. (Huang *et al.*, 2003, p.93).

Espoused national cultural values are defined as "The degree to which an individual embraces the values of his or her national culture" (Srite and Karahanna, 2006, p.681). National cultural values are explained in Hofstede's famous study (Hofstede, 1980) and this study is a pioneer of that era when there were not many cultural studies (Jones, 2007, p.5). National cultural values can be espoused at different levels by the citizens of a nation. For example, individualism and collectivism studies performed in different cultures showed that, in societies both idiocentric and allocentric people exist in different ratios (Triandis, 2004, p. 90). Therefore, cultural values can be measured at individual level (Dorfman and Howell, 2004, p.129). Espoused national cultural values are described as follows:

* Power distance is the accepted inequality of power distribution by individuals (Srite and Karahanna, 2006, p.682). It is the expectation and acception of unequal distribution of power by less powerful members of organisations (Richardson ve Smith, 2007).
* Individualism is an individual's emphasise on their own needs instead of group needs (Srite and Karahanna, 2006, p.682). Individualistic cultures encourage individuals to take some risks. Individuals have freedom to focus on their personal goals, but they are responsible for their actions. In collectivist cultures, there is a strong sense of harmony. People work more for the society than their personal goals and are responsible to the group for their actions. In collectivist cultures achievement and non-achievement is shared by the group instead of individuals (Wild *et al.*, 2006, p.76).
* Uncertainty avoidance is an individual's tolerance of ambiguous situations (Srite and Karahanna, 2006, p.682). In high uncertainty avoidance cultures individuals worry about their future, resist to changes more and refrain from making mistakes and taking risks, they are not ambitious for personal achievement and need to compromise with others and the written rules of the organisation (Hofstede, 1980, p.176).
* Masculinity is a domination of individual's values such as assertiveness, competetiveness etc. and femininity is related to good relations, quality of life etc.

(Srite and Karahanna, 2006, p. 682). According to Hofstede (1980, p.294), if in a society earning money and challenging behaviors are dominant values, this is a masculine culture. In a feministic culture interpersonal relations are important.

4. Hypotheses of the Research

The hypotheses of the research are presented below:

H1: Perceived ease of use (PEOU) has a direct positive effect on e-mail usage intention (UI). Usage of a system, besides other factors, is dependent on PEOU (Davis, 1989, p.320). PEOU is a potential factor that may increase user acceptance (Venkatesh and Morris, 2000, p.118).

H2: Perceived usefulness (PU) has a direct positive effect on E-mail Usage Intention (UI). People tend to use a system more as they believe that using that system enable them to do their work better (Davis, 1989, p.320). An important part of technology acceptance model research shows that PU is an important determinant of usage behaviour (Venkatesh and Morris, 2000, p. 117).

H3: Perceived ease of use (PEOU) has a direct positive effect on perceived usefulness (PU). Assuming that all other factors are equal, if a technology is easier to use, it is perceived as more useful (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000, p. 192).

H4: Subjective norm (SN) has a direct positive effect on perceived usefulness (PU). If a superior or a peer describe a system as useful, a person may also perceive that system as useful (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000, p. 189).

H5: Subjective norm (SN) has a direct positive effect on e-mail usage intention (UI). People may wish to perform a behaviour even if they do not tend to do it, in case they think that others want them to perform that behaviour (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000, p. 187).

H5a: Collectivisim (C) has a positive moderation effect between subjective norm (SN) and e-mail usage intention (UI). People that espouse individualist cultural values are less sensitive to other people's opinions in their environment and people that espouse collectivist cultural values obey to reference group norms (Srite and Karahanna, 2006, p. 687).

H5b: Power distance (PD) has a positive moderation effect between subjective norm (SN) and e-mail usage intention (UI). People that have higher power distance are more careful about compromising with their superiors (Srite and Karahanna, 2006, p. 687).

H5c: Femininity (F) has a positive moderation effect between subjective Norm (SN) and e-mail usage intention (UI). People that espouse feminine cultural values are more concerned with cooperation and their behaviour is more influenced by other people (Srite and Karahanna, 2006, p. 686).

H5d: Uncertainty avoidance (UA) has a positive moderation effect between subjective norm (SN) and e-mail usage intention (UI).When superiors or peers refer to their experience and perceptions regarding the system, the uncertainty about the use of the system diminishes.

H6: Power distance (PD) has a negative effect on e-mail usage intention (UI). In cultures with high power distance, individuals refrain from communication media that

doesn't allow face-to-face communication (Straub *et al.*, 1997). Individuals with higher power distance prefer to use a media that can convey more social cues, because filtering effect of e-mail might create an equality perception (Huang *et al.*, 2003, p.95).

H7: E-mail usage intention (UI) has no effect on e-mail usage (U). In literature, the relation between usage intention and usage is mostly found as statistically insignificant (Lee *et al.*, 2003, p.760).

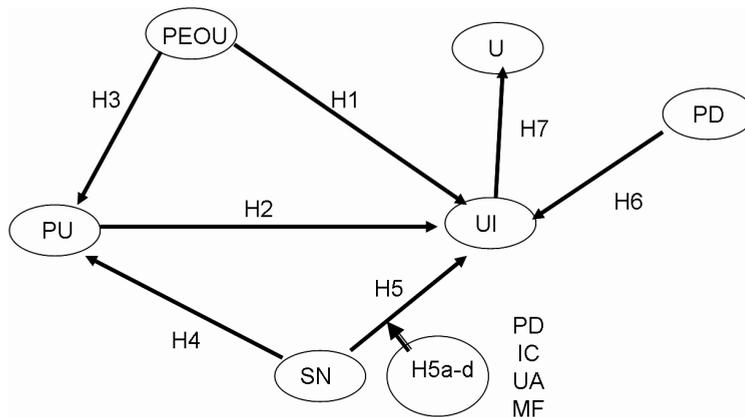Conceptual model of the hypothesis is shown in Figure 1.

Fig 1. Conceptual model

PU:Perceived Usefulness   PD: Power Distance   UI: Usage Intention
PEOU: Perceived Ease of   UseIC: Individualism/Collectivism   MF: Masculinity/Femininity
SN: Subjective Norm   UA: Uncertainty Avoidance   U:Usage

For extended technology acceptance model (TAM2), the scale that was improved by Davis (1989) and extended by Venkatesh and Davis (2000) is used. Subjective norm and behavioral intention are two-item constructs in those scales. However, Hair *et al.* (2005, p. 783) recommended that in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) at least three, preferably four items per construct should be used. In addition, Bayram (2010, p.50) recommends using three or more observed variables for one latent variable. For that purpose, two items for social influence from Venkatesh *et al.* (2003) and two items for behavioral intention from Srite ve Karahanna (2006) were added to the scale and PU (4), PEOU (4), SN (4) and UI (4) items were used in the scale. For espoused national cultural values, Dorfman and Howell's (1988) scale IC (6), PD (6), MF (9) and UA (5) items were used.

5. Analysis and Methods

Correlation coefficients, reliability analysis (Cronbach Alpha), average and standard deviation values are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Correlations, reliability, average and standard deviation values

Var. Name	Ave. (/5.00)	Std. Dev.	1 IC	2 PD	3 UA	4 MF	5 PEOU	6 PU	7 SN	8 UI
1.IC	3.88	0.76	(0.76)							
2.PD	2.08	0.69	-0.67	(0.64)						
3.UA	4.26	0.65	0.48**	-0.10	(0.87)					
4.MF	2.61	0.91	0.08	0.18**	-0.06	(0.82)				
5.PEOU	4.15	0.69	0.28**	-0.12	0.42**	0.06	(0.71)			
6.PU	3.94	0.83	0.23**	-0.15*	0.38**	0.10	0.60**	(0.93)		
7.SN	3.65	0.68	0.18**	-0.05	0.21**	0.06	0.50**	0.42**	(0.79)	
8.UI	4.25	0.63	0.27**	-.22**	0.39**	-0.02	0.58**	0.57**	0.47**	(0.87)

* Significant at the 0.01 level
** Significant at the 0.05 level

Since minimum 0.60 Cronbach Alpha value confirms the reliability of the scale (Kalaycı, 2008, p.405) and considering that Dorfman ve Howell's (1988) original scale had 0.57 Cronbach Alpha value for power distance (Taras, 2008, p.25), Cronbach Alpha value for power distance (0.64) is acceptable in Table.1. In addition, there is no correlation coefficient greater than 0.85 that shows the lack of multicollinearity problem (Kline, 2005, p.56).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using a structural equation modeling programme (SEM) performed for TAM2 and ENCV independently. In CFA, a high Modification Indices (M.I.) value indicates cross-loading (Byrne, 2010, p.108). In TAM 2 model, a total of 3 items [PU(1), PEOU(1) and UI (1)] and in ENCV model a total of 9 items [IC (2), PD (2), MF (4) and UA(1)] were extracted because of high M.I. values.

After CFA, structural regression model analysis was performed for testing some hypotheses (i.e. H1-H5, H6 and H7). Model fit indices of CFA and structural regression models are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Model fit indices of CFA and structural regression models

MODEL	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
TAM2	2.220 < 3	0.938>0.90	0.903>0.90	0.971>0.95	0.065 (0.05-0.08)*
ENCV	1.537 < 3	0.933>0.90	0.910>0.90	0.961>0.95	0.043 <0.050
STR.REG. MODEL	1.906< 3	0.923>0.90	0.89 (0.85-0.89)*	0.962>0.95	0.056 (0.05-0.08)*

* Acceptable Fit (Meydan and Şeşen, 2011, p. 37)

According to the analysis results, there is a strong (β=0,800) relationship between PEOU and PU. Also, UI is mostly dependent on PEOU (β=0,558), and SN (β=0,248). The relation between power distance and e-mail usage intention is negative (β=-0.129), in other words, as the power distance increases, e-mail usage intention decreases. The other regressions at the model are statistically insignificant. Variables explained 59.5% (R^2) of UI, and 63.9% of PU.

Moderation effect of a variable can be explained as its effect on a dependent variable by an interacting independent variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986, p. 1174). The hypotheses

regarding a moderation (i.e.H5a-d) were tested by using hierarchical regression analysis, and only hypothesis H5b was supported. According to that hypothesis, power distance (PD) has a positive moderation effect between subjective norm (SN) and usage intention (UI). In other words, as power distance increases, the effect of SN on UI also increases.

The data was collected by means of a questionnaire. The participants in the questionnaire were white-collared workers who have access to e-mail system for work purposes in a Turkish iron and steel company. In total, 320 questionnaires were distributed via e-mail and in paper form. 295 (92%) of those returned back and 286 were usable. According to the descriptive statistics, 206 (72%) participants were men and 80 (28%) were women. The average age was 34 and 233 had at least a university bachelor degree.

6. Results

Test results of the hypothesis are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of hypothesis tests

Hypothesis Number	Description	Result
H1	PEOU-UI	Supported
H2	PU-UI	Not Supported
H3	PEOU-PU	Supported
H4	SN-PU	Not Supported
H5	SN-UI	Supported
H5a	SN X C-UI	Not Supported
H5b	SN X PD (+)-UI	Supported
H5c	SN X F-UI	Not Supported
H5d	SN X UA (+)-UI	Not Supported
H6	PD (-)-UI	Supported
H7	UI-U (No relation)	Supported

According to Hofstede's research, Turkish people are collectivist, close to femininity, have high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. In that sample, it is found that national cultural values are espoused by individuals except power distance. The reason for having low power distance may stem from high education level of the participants.

The perceived ease of use of e-mail causes direct and positive effect on usage intention. When people perceive a system as user-friendly, they tend to use it more often. In addition, there is a direct and positive relation between subjective norm and usage intention. It was an expected result of this research, because during interviews the participants told that even the CEO of the company used e-mail effectively and sent and received e-mails from their subordinates.

There is a slight but significant relation between power distance and e-mail usage intention. This relation is negative and supports the literature (Straub *et al.*, 1997, p. 3; Huang , 2003, p. 98). E-mail causes equality perception by filtering social cues. However, power distance has a positive moderation effect between subjective norm and usage intention. A reason for that may be the fact that people who have high power distance care more about what their superiors and peers want them to do.

Individualism has a positive moderation effect between subjective norm and e-mail usage intention. Sending an e-mail is an individualistic action and distinguishes the individual from their group. For this reason, even if others encourage one to send an e-mail, individualists do that more often than collectivists.

As uncertainty avoidance decreases, the effect of subjective norm on e-mail usage intention increases. This stems from the poor media richness of e-mail. Individuals with low uncertainty avoidance can tolerate poor properties (i.e. lack of instant feedback, face expressions etc.) of e-mail.

Masculinity moderates the relation between subjective norm and e-mail usage intention positively. This is because individuals with masculine values have more desire for promotion and achievement and they don't want to have different ideas from their superiors on e-mail usage.

There is no significant relation between usage intention and real usage and this supports the literature (Lee *et al.*, 2003, p. 760). The reason for that could be that opportunities and resources are necessary to transform an intention into behavior.

This research has been effected in one organisation only. The reason for that was to fix the variables such as organisational culture and e-mail infrastructure. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalised. For a general conclusion, similar surveys should be carried out in various companies, various sectors, and possibily various countries.

7. Conclusion

In our sample, people tend to use e-mail if they perceive it as "easy to use" system, and this perception brings together the perception of usefulness. When establishing a computer-mediated communication system in a company, easy usage should be the first criterion to be taken into account.

Besides that, in societies that have strong social pressures on individuals, such as Turkey, at the acceptance of communication technology, other people's ideas (especially the ideas of superiors and peers) are very important and this effect is stronger for the people that have higher power distances.

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ELEKTRONINIO PAŠTO PRIIMTINUMO VERTINIMAS TAIKANT IŠPLĖSTĄ TECHNOLOGIJŲ PALANKUMO IR PALAIKOMŲ KULTŪRINIŲ VERTYBIŲ RIBOJANTI ĮTAKA PASIRENKANT TARP SUBJEKTYVIŲ NORMŲ IR VARTOJIMO INTENCIJŲ

Savaş MUTLU, Azize ERGENELİ

Santrauka. Tyrimo tikslas yra pritaikyti Išplėstą technologijų palankumo modelį (TAM2) elektroninio pašto priimtinumo vertinimui Turkijos anglies ir plieno kompanijoje ir ištirti ribojantį palaikomų kultūrinių vengimas ir jėgos distancija) poveikį renkantis tarp subjektyvių normų ir elektroninio pašto vartojimo intencijų. Taip pat buvo ištirtas tiesioginis Jėgos distancijos poveikis elektroninio pašto naudojimo intencijoms. Tyrime dalyvavo 286 darbuotojai „baltosios apykaklės". Tyrimo rezultatams aprašyti buvo pritaikytas Statistinių duomenų apdorojimo paketas ir struktūrinių lygčių modeliavimas. Tyrimo rezultate buvo gauta priklausomybė tarp elektroninio pašto naudojimo intencijų ir suvokto naudojimo lengvumo bei subjektyvių normų. Suvoktas naudojimo lengvumas apsprendė suvoktą naudingumą, o jėgos distancija turėjo tiesioginę neigiamą įtaką elektroninio pašto naudojimo intencijoms. Tuo tarpu subjektyvios normos turėjo nuosaikią teigiamą įtaką elektroninio pašto naudojimo intencijoms.

Savaş Mutlu – PhD in Business Administration, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. Scientific Research Areas-Organizational behavior, management information systems, technology management.

Savaş Mutlu – mokslų daktaras, Verslo administravimo katedra, Hacettepe universitetas, Ankara, Turkija. Mokslo tyrimų srifys: organizacinė elgsena, valdymo informacinės sistemos, technologijų valdymas.

Azize Ergeneli – PhD in Business Administration, Professor of Organizational Behavior, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. Scientific Research Areas-Organizational behavior.

Azize Ergeneli – Organizacinės elgsenos profesorius, mokslų daktaras, Verslo administravimo katedra, Hacettepe universitetas, Ankara, Turkija. Mokslo tyrimų srifys: organizacinė elgsena.