Understanding the Acceptance and Use of M-Learning Apps by Entrepreneurs: An Application of the Social-Cognitive and Motivational Theories

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ABSTRACT
This study is designed to examine factors influencing the acceptance of m-learning apps by entrepreneurs. The constructs used to develop the proposed model were drawn from the social cognitive and motivational theories. The model was validated using 218 valid responses from entrepreneurs in South Africa. The results showed that both intrinsic (i.e. perceived enjoyment) and extrinsic (i.e. perceived usefulness and social influence) motivational factors had a direct positive influence on the behavioral intentions to adopt m-learning apps. Also, perceived usefulness, which showed the strongest direct influence on behavioral intentions, was directly influenced by outcome expectancy, and indirectly influenced by self-efficacy. The study also evaluated the outcomes of use behavior. For one, entrepreneurs who used m-learning apps were more likely to recommend the m-learning apps to others. Moreover, use behavior was shown to have a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

KEYWORDS
Entrepreneurs, Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, M-Learning, Social Cognitive Theory

1. INTRODUCTION
Advances in mobile technologies over the years have opened up a wide range of services and information that can be accessed through different kinds of mobile applications for use in various domains. One such domain that has seen unprecedented improvements is the mobile learning (m-learning) domain. As such, there has been increasing interest from researchers in understanding the acceptance of m-learning applications (Al-Emran, Mezhuyev, Kamaludin, 2018; Milošević, Živković, Manasijević & Nikolić, 2015). M-learning can be broadly defined as the use of mobile technologies to acquire knowledge and skills (Liu, Li & Carlsson, 2010). M-learning is quite popular because it provides several benefits to users including portability, ubiquity and mobility (i.e. learning not constrained by time and location), increased engagement with learning content, ability to enhance knowledge retention, cost-effectiveness, and the rapid development of the capabilities of mobile devices (Milošević et al., 2015; Peng, Su, Chou & Tsai, 2009).

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Despite the benefits and growing capabilities of m-learning applications (henceforth referred to simply as m-learning apps), many researchers have argued that much is still not known about the factors that influence the acceptance of m-learning apps (Al-Emran et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2010; Milošević et al., 2015; Sabah, 2016). This could possibly be explained by the over-reliance on the technology acceptance model (TAM) as the majority of m-learning studies to date have focused on the TAM as their fundamental theoretical model (Al-Emran et al., 2018; Poong, Yamaguchi & Takada, 2017; Sánchez-Prieto, Olmos-Migueláñez & García-Peñalvo, 2017). In fact, continuous validation of the TAM in the m-learning context has provided mixed findings. For example, while some researchers have found ease of use to positively influence m-learning adoption (Poong et al., 2017), the association was non-significant in other studies (Liu et al., 2010). As such, instead of simply extending the TAM with other constructs as suggested in prior studies (Al-Emran et al., 2018), new insights on the factors that influence m-learning acceptance might be gained by developing and testing other theoretical models. This is particularly important as Benbasat and Barki (2007) argued that over-reliance on the TAM in any domain might put blinders on researcher’s abilities to unearth other valuable constructs, theories, and models that could explain technology acceptance in the domain (i.e. m-learning in the context of the present study). Additionally, although m-learning apps are widely used outside of academia (Liu et al., 2010), the systematic review by Al-Emran et al. (2018) showed that many of the prior studies on m-learning adoption have mostly focused on students. As such, it is imperative to also evaluate m-learning acceptance by other groups of users. Lastly, existing technology acceptance measurements have been criticized for not considering outcome factors by examining whether or not the use of the adopted technologies provide any known benefits to the users (Oliveira, Thomas, Baptista & Campos, 2016). The above discussion clearly suggests the existence of important gaps that need to be addressed in the m-learning adoption literature.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing arguments, the present study aims to make three main contributions. Firstly, the study develops and presents a new model for acceptance of m-learning apps using the social cognitive and motivational theories. Secondly, the study shifts away from the traditional evaluation of student’s acceptance of m-learning apps and focuses on the acceptance of these apps by entrepreneurs. The focus on entrepreneurs is motivated by the widely acknowledged contribution of entrepreneurship in today’s world (Maritz & Brown, 2013; Von Graevenitz, Harhoff & Weber, 2010) and the fact that entrepreneurs require continuous self-directed learning to achieve sustained success in their businesses (Erzetic, 2008). As such, entrepreneurs can benefit from the portability, ubiquity, and mobility of m-learning apps to continuously improve their knowledge and skills, thus making them a valuable user group for m-learning apps. Lastly, by focusing on entrepreneurs, the present study includes an outcome variable in the model by examining how the use of m-learning apps influenced entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

The rest of this study is structured as follows. Next, the paper presents the theoretical background, highlighting the key theories used in the development of the model. Afterward, the research model and the development of the hypotheses are presented. Following that is a presentation of the research methodology and data analysis. Lastly, the discussion and conclusions are presented.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

The SCT postulates that human behavior is determined by social and psychological or personal factors. Basically, the SCT focuses on analyzing how cognitive processes (i.e. feelings and thoughts) and social interactions determine the behavioral actions that an individual will take. Many researchers share the view that the SCT is one of the most powerful theories for explaining human behavior (Iifinedo, 2017; Rana & Dwivedi, 2015). As such, the SCT has been widely used to test human behavior in different domains, including the use of information systems. In the present study, the focus will be
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