Chapter IV

The General Conceptual Model

Introduction

In this chapter, a general theoretical model is proposed that links learners’ satisfaction and learners’ value of e-learning systems in order to assess learners’ perceived effectiveness of such systems. The central research question in this study is: Is there a relationship between learners’ perceived satisfaction with e-learning systems and learners’ perceived value for learners’ perceived effectiveness of e-learning systems?

The significance of the value construct in the context of e-learning systems has never been evaluated. How the value of e-learning systems relates to other constructs, such as satisfaction with e-learning systems and ultimately whether the value of e-learning systems can be used to indicate learners’ perceived IS effectiveness remains open. In this chapter, a general conceptual model or framework is proposed to address this phenomenon in the context of e-learning systems. The proposed model or framework will provide procedures to
identify and measure the key constructs (satisfaction with e-learning systems, value of e-learning systems, and effectiveness of e-learning systems). This chapter also defines precisely the individual characteristics and four major dimensions (categories) for evaluating value of e-learning systems and satisfaction with e-learning systems based on comprehensive literature reviewed in Chapters II and III. Additionally, this chapter proposes five specific research questions that are addressed in Chapter VII. Two additional specific research questions are proposed in Chapters V and VI.

Overview of the Proposed General Conceptual Model

The review of value theory presented in Chapter II highlights the relationships between major conceptual constructs associated with the value construct. Research from the fields of psychology and marketing suggest that value, attitude, behavior, and satisfaction constructs are closely related. Many studies in both psychology and marketing as well as in the field of information systems have explored the relationships between these constructs. Results of such research suggest that these constructs are related in the sequence: value impacts attitude that impacts behavior, which in turn impacts satisfaction (Beatty, Kahle, Homer, & Misra, 1985; Durgee, O’Connor, & Veryzer, 1996; Feather, 1967, 1975; Kahle & Kennedy, 1988; Prescott & Hopkins, 1984; Rokeach, 1969, 1973). The goal of this study is not to provide empirical evidence for such a sequence, rather it is to use this sequence to develop a framework that predicts learners’ perceived effectiveness of e-learning systems based on the learners’ perceived value and satisfaction associated with such systems. Furthermore, although this book will use only two of the constructs in this sequence (value and satisfaction), the significance of attitude and behavior should not be underestimated. Information systems researchers investigated the sequence of attitude, behavior, and satisfaction; however the value construct was largely ignored due to its complexity (Etezadi-Amoli & Farhoomand, 1991, p. 1).

Grover, Jeong, and Segars (1996) suggested that over the years, the information systems research efforts have developed “robust (reliable and valid) instruments that can be used to measure … beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions associated with IS characteristics” (p. 179). Noticeably missing in their review
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