

Linking Transfer Intention to Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Usage

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ABSTRACT

The quest for efficiency and overall business performance has pushed up demands for enterprise systems (ES) in organisation. More so, the belief that ES adoption leads to control of huge market share has heightened the demand for ES packages such as, enterprise resource planning (ERP). ERP distinguished itself from other IT software; it allows customisation of business processes into a single compacted software for organisation-wide use. ERP are popular, because it enhances seamless process of information, and organisation's operational efficiency. While ERP affects organisational efficiency, they are also characterised by huge implementation cost and complex to use after 'going live'. These issues among others affect end user's acceptance behaviour. In spite of training provision as a pervasive mechanism in alleviating the problem of limited acceptance and utilisation of ERP, there are still evidence of minimal usage of pre-adoption learning in this environment. It is therefore pertinent to understanding end user's transfer intention - a critical factor in end user's behaviour in ERP arena. Intention is a cognitive representation of an individual's willingness to perform a given behaviour. Intention is a compelling predictor of behaviour; and it is a representation of calculated actions. However, research on the link between transfer intention and ERP usage is scarce. Specifically, research on the predictors of transfer intention and the linkage between transfer intention and ERP usage is still lacking in IS studies. This paper bridges this gap by putting forward a model that depicts these relationships.

Keywords: End User, Intention, Transfer Intention, Enterprise Systems, ERP, System Usage

1. INTRODUCTION

The quest for competitive advantage and efficient business performance has pushed up the demand and adoption of enterprise systems in organisation (ES). The belief that ES adoption will lead to the control of huge market share has driven the huge demand for ES packages.

Enterprise Systems (ES) are off-the-shelf IT packages, which enhances seamless business information processes in organisation. ES are useful IT software that leads to improved organisational performance and operational efficiency. ES are outstanding in processing information without hitches. ES distinguished itself from other IT software, because it allows separate inter-department business processes to be easily compacted in a single for organisation-wide use.

ES packages are widely used solutions, such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). While ES affects organisational efficiency, they are also characterised by huge implementation cost. Apart from the huge implementation cost, the end-user finds it complex to use after going 'live'. This suggests that, the complex nature of ES may affect end user's usage behaviour. Research has acknowledged technology training as a pervasive mechanism useful in alleviating the problem of limited utilisation in ES arena (Umble, Haft, & Umble 2003; Garg, 2010; Amoako-Gyampah & Salam 2004). Technology training teaches skills, and required knowledge on the system (Compeau & Higgins, 1995). The importance of training in this area is strengthened by the need for end-users to have the prerequisite skills, knowledge and competencies, which facilitates better performance on the systems.

Despite the importance in the provision of training as an important phase in IS implementation, there are red flags concerning the minimal usage of acquired learning in IS environment (Olfman & Bostrom, 1991; Shayo & Olfman, 1994).

Tackling this problem requires an understanding of end user's transfer intention in IS. Ajzen (1991) defined intention as a cognitive representation of an individual's willingness to perform a given behaviour. In fact, intention is a potent predictor of behaviour. Locke and Latham (1990) aver that, intention is a representation of planned actions.

Intention is thought process that leads to the performance of an action. Consequently, intention is a process, with an object of choice. The choice from the process is the action – the output of the process. It is suggestive that intention governs a human engagement in a particular behaviour. Intention is the best predictor of human behaviour, since it is a commitment to achieve respective outcomes and performance of relevant behaviour (Gollwitzer 1993). The discussion seems to suggest that, certain predicated conditions are triggers of intention. Machin and Fogarty (2004) opined that, intentions are instrumental in making salient to the individual the aspects of the environment that were relevant to the achievement of their aim. Research studies on transfer intention is limited (Machin & Fogarty, 1997; 2003; 2004; Foxon, 1993). More importantly, the research on the link between transfer intention and ES usage is scarce. Specifically, research on the predictors of transfer intention and the impact of transfer intention on ES usage is lacking in this area. This paper bridge this gap by putting forward a model, which depicts this relationship. For example, researchers have investigated the impact of course information, accountability, status of program, motivation to transfer, and self-efficacy on transfer intention (Baldwin & Magjuka, 1991; Machin & Fogarty, 2003; 2004; Al-Eisa., 2009). Most of the opinions on the relationship between transfer intentions and post training performance is anecdotal (Al-Eisa., 2009). The paucity of knowledge on transfer intention is also evident in the IS research genre. This paper proposed that, transfer intention would enhance end user's learning utilisation in ES environment.

Intention has been suggested to have some immediate objective; otherwise one's action would be purposeless (Tubbs & Ekeberg, 1991). The opinion also supports the view that intention is a process, with an object of choice. The choice that emerged from the process is followed by an action. It is suggestive that intention governs a person's engagement in a particular behaviour. Locke and Latham (1990) refer to intention as a representation of planned actions. Gollwitzer (1993) noted that intention is the best predictor of human behaviour, since it is a commitment to achieve respective outcomes and to perform relevant behaviour. This kind of intention is predicated on certain conditions for it to be triggered. Machin and Fogarty (2004) explain that intentions were regarded as instrumental in making salient to the individual the aspects of the environment that were relevant to the achievement of their aim. Investigation on transfer intention in transfer literature is limited (see Machin & Fogarty, 1997; 2003; 2004; Foxon, 1993). For example, researchers have investigated the impact of course information, accountability, status of program, motivation to transfer, and self-efficacy on transfer intention (Baldwin & Magjuka, 1991; Machin & Fogarty, 2003; 2004; Al-Eisa., 2009). The available studies on transfer intention have not really tested its influence on transfer initiation. While only a handful of studies have explored the relationship between transfer intention on transfer initiation (Foxon, 1997). Most of the opinions on the relationship between transfer intentions till date are parenthetical (Al-Eisa., 2009). This might likely remain so until an objective test of the influence of transfer intention on transfer initiation is empirically validated. The inclusion of transfer intention is congruent with the transfer process model. This study assesses the relationship between transfer intention and transfer initiation, as well as the effect of transfer intention in the relationship between affective-motivational outcomes of learning and transfer initiation.

2. THEORY AND RESEARCH MODEL

Training motivation theory aver that motivation to learn has affects learning outcomes. Previous research studies suggest a positive relationship between attitude and motivation as possible indicators of training effectiveness (Klein, Noe & Wang 2006). The literature recognised the influence of individual and situational factors on training motivation (Colquitt et al., 2000). The conceptual model draws from relevant literature and propose training motivation, perceived ease-of-use, and perceived usefulness as predictors of end user's transfer intention. The post learning perspective of ES implementation, which are inadequately covered in IS guides this conceptual model. We draw from TAM theory to explicate the identify research gap (Boudreau, 2002). This conceptual model operationalised perceived ease-of-use and perceived usefulness of training technology as predictors of transfer intention.

2.1 Perceived Ease-Of-Use

One of the reactions from technology training is perception of ease-of- use (Davis, 1989). Perception of ease-of-use (PEOU) is the degree to which a person believes that using a system would be free of effort. That is, information systems usage will not lead to severe mental tasks, which may require complex manoeuvrings. This absence of complexity in technology designs influence the development of positive attitude.

Technology training has proved to be an effective intervention approach in the development of end-users' attitudes and beliefs system (Yi & Davis, 2001). In fact, it is believed that, training intervention is one way of reducing end-users anxiety, by strengthening the self-efficacy of the users on the system. Technology training is a setting which provides end-users the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the system's features during the training. This allows the users to have a feel of the

systems, as well as to develop a perception concerning the technology (Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Igbaria & Iivari, 1995). Perceived ease of use as a reaction outcome of training (Amoako-Gyampah & Salam, 2004; Marler et al., 2006) enhances end user's acceptance behaviour and attitude concerning the technology during the training sessions.

One of the training reactions and outcome process that occurs during IT training is perception of ease-of-use. The perception of ease-of-use enhances end-user learning and optimisation of the system. Positive perception of the system reduces user anxiety in learning an innovation. The resultant effect of this is an increase of users' training motivation. Based on the above assertions, we therefore proposed that, positive perception of ease-of-use of the system will influence end user's motivation during enterprise systems training. Hence, it is proposed that,

Proposition 1: Positive perception of ease-of-use of enterprise systems will influence end user's transfer intention in enterprise systems.

2.2. Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989) defined perceived usefulness as end user's belief that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance. Technology acceptance model (TAM) argued that, IS task performance is determined by the shared belief on the system usefulness. That is, the IS artefact will have overall positive effect on outcome of performance.

Research evidence shows that, training is an important mechanism for increasing end user's perception of IS usefulness. Igbaria, Zinatelli, Cragg & Cavaye, (1997) found that, internal training is an effective strategy that significantly influence end user's perception of usefulness in IS terrain. The research outcome finds parallel in previous findings on the impact of training on adoption behaviour in IS, especially IS usage. Similarly, empirical evidence shows end-user training positively leads to the formation of shared beliefs in the benefits of the system Amoako-Gyampah & Salam (2004). Evidence has shown that, transfer intention is a decisional process and an important predictor of behavioural performance (Ajzen, 1991). Since training motivation leads to persistence in learning the training content and material, therefore end user's will equally develop perception of usefulness of the systems. End user's perception of usefulness of the system will enhance system usage in the task environment, based on the fact that, there is a conviction on the utility, relevance and usefulness of the system. Based on this, we proposed a significant relationship between user's PU and post training behaviour.

Proposition 2: Positive perception of usefulness of enterprise systems will influence end user's transfer intention in enterprise systems.

2.3 Transfer Intention

Transfer intention is rooted in the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The theory of planned behaviour (TPB), described intention as a cognitive representation of an individual's willingness to perform a given behaviour. Ajzen further argued that, intention is a potent predictor of behaviour. In this context, a deliberate also termed as planned behaviour. Intention refers to a state of mind that directs an individual's attention, experience and behaviour toward a certain object (Bird, 1988). Ajzen (1991) argued that intention is an endpoint of the motivational process that encompasses the motivation or desire to carry out an action. Transfer intention relates more with the tendency to performance a behaviour or action than the motivation or desire to carry

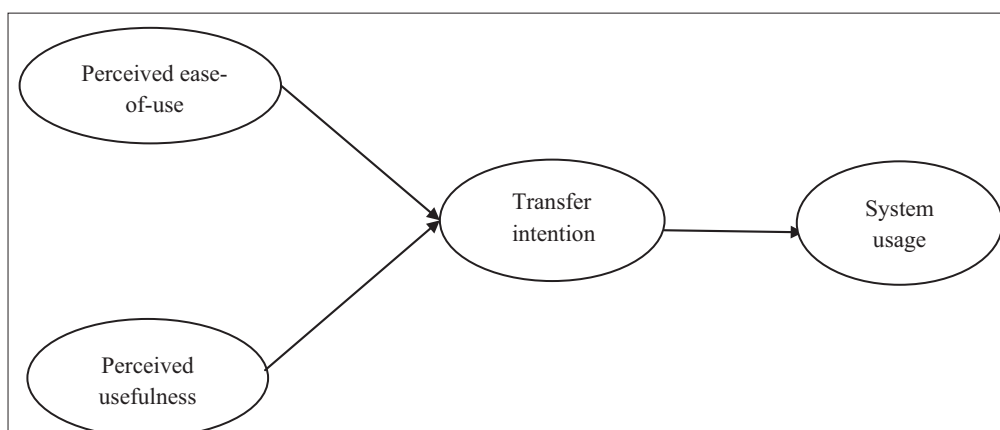


Figure 1: Research model

out an action. The description shows that, intention signifies the commitment to carry out a behaviour, while motivation is concerned with the desire to perform a behaviour. Transfer intention is a trainee's end-of-course motivation to use aspects of training in the work setting (Foxon, 1993). It is a proximal determination by the end-user to commence the use of acquired, knowledge, behaviour and skills on the job. Al-Eisa et al. (2009) elucidated that, intention represent end user's tendency or inclination to move to transfer initiation process (Foxon, 1993). This phase is characterised by transition from cognition to action, that is, end user's commitment to use of skills on the job. The above illustration suggests that, transfer intention is crucial to the effective utilisation of skills in task context. This reaction outcome affects training effectiveness, because low or higher transfer intention may predict the extent to which an end-user will apply acquired learning on the job. On the positive side, high transfer intention will lead to higher degree of transfer performance. Similarly, low transfer intention will result in poor transfer performance in the workplace. Therefore, lower transfer intention is not desirable in transfer environment, as it could potentially hinder transfer performance in such terrain.

TPB viewed intention as a cognitive representation of an individual's willingness to perform a target behaviour. Therefore, intention is a predictor of actions or behaviours, which could be task specific. Intention therefore precedes and predicts action or performance of actions. The aggregate of the above arguments is that, end-user with high transfer intention will perform better in IS post training task environment. Based on the above premise, the third proposition is that;

Proposition 3: Transfer intention will significantly influence IS usage

3. CONCLUSION

As customised, off-the shelf IT solutions, ES brings efficiency to business and data processing in organisation. While current research in ES training is scanty, particularly training motivation, we recognised the need to such an important issue such as training motivation in ES.

This model will explore, issues surrounding ES training motivation. We argued that, an understanding of the impact of individual variables and technological features of the ES will shed lights on motivational states of end-user during ES training phase. Based on the above, we proposed that, mastery goal oriented individual will be motivated to learn, even in complex environment like ES training. The model also proposed that, end users' perception of-ease-of-use, as a reaction outcome from interacting with the system enhances ES learning. Finally, it is proposed that, compatible system interface reduces the frustration associated with learning a complex IT system like ES. Complex interface designs may add to end-user anxiety, this of course decreases training motivation (Webster & Martocchio, 1993). Further exploration of this study, will contribute to the development of better training and systems designs. The understanding of the issues and implementing it in the ES training program development will lead to more success in ES training and post training performance of end-users. On the overall, this paper has highlighted end users' training motivation as an important issue that requires attention from both researchers and practitioners in this area.

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