MEASURING STUDENTS E-READINESS FOR E-LEARNING AT EGYPTIAN FACULTIES OF TOURISM AND HOTELS

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Abstract: E learning is becoming increasingly prominent in higher education, with universities increasing provision and more students signing up. This research measures the students’ e readiness for e learning at the faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt which influenced by a number of factors and dimensions. These are technical skills, learning skills and time management behavior. This may help Tourism faculties to promote the use of IT in teaching and learning and also apply e learning effectively in these faculties to make qualified students for market work. Data was collected through an interview based on a questionnaire of 62 students of tourism studies and hotel management departments. Also this research is based on a basic hypothesis that there is a shortage and insufficient of students e readiness for e learning. E readiness model is utilized in this research.

Keywords: e learning, e readiness, IT, Quality, Measuring e readiness, Higher education

I.

Using developed information and communication technologies (ICT) in learning process have been increased the interest by both academic and non academic institutions in e learning. The Increasing of e learning especially in higher education raises the issue of quality resulting in both theoretical and practical evidence of how to achieve high quality as well as benefitting from e learning (Ismail, 2008). As a nation, Egypt is only just beginning to engage with e learning and as a result, it is believed that many people within the country fully understand or appreciate the power and benefits provided by e learning (Gohneim, 2008). In tourism sector, tourism is the fourth largest exported service in the world, representing of global exports of 7 % of good & services or 30% of services exports alone (Egyptian Tourism Federation, 2008). Egypt has no doubt been effects by this international development that the tourism sector is estimated to generate a total of 18.8$ billion in both direct and indirect economy (Egyptian Ministry of tourism, 2007. To meet this growth in demand, accommodation capacity has also grown. It based out demand growth with 9% increase in capacity over 2005-2010. In addition, it has been observed growth of tourism related service and facilities during 2005-2009, such as travel agents, restaurants, cafeterias and moreover environmental awareness. Furthermore, the planned expansion of faculties and institutions of tourism and hotels management should further enhance tourism performance in coming years (Abdelwahab, 2006). So, tourism industry needs better students and more students in field of tourism and Hotels management. It needs also academics as the world moves towards the 2015 target of education for all, and we need raise the skills of the existing tourism studies and hotel management academics, one of the ways to strengthening education process is E learning (Waring, s.(2006) & Elshenawi, 2007)&(Nermin, 2007).E learning in the university context is influenced by a number of factors. However, the researcher particular interest in this paper in the e readiness of the students for e learning at the Egyptian faculties of tourism and hotels in Fayoum, Menia, Helwan and Alex. This is to the increasing and flexible market that is difficult to research by only traditional education.
Research Objective

The main objective of the research is measuring student’s e readiness for e learning at faculties of tourism and hotels in Fayoum, Helwan, Menia and Alexandria according to quality factors of e learning in Higher education and to discover the influencing factors on their e readiness, beside clarify the barriers and obstacles that hinder ineffectively of this system to benefit from this system to enhance learning process in tourism educational sector. Lastly, encourage the faculties of tourism to work with up to date practices.

Research Hypotheses

Research based on a main hypothesis that there is a shortage and insufficient e readiness for e learning of the students at the faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt.

1.1

There may be as many definitions of e learning as there are academic papers on the subject, but broadly speaking they focus on the same set of features. The “e” in e learning stands for electronic, so e learning refers to learning with use of communication and information technologies. This agree with the definition by the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE, 2005), any learning that uses ICT.

Using the internet in tourism education creates some benefits for both students and the staff members such as, Communication facilitator that students, staff and administration can communicate directly with each other, beside Information source the revolution of the amount of information for academics and students alike who can access to internet to all locations at any one time. They can obtain the information from more sources than ever before, which provides new teaching and learning opportunities, furthermore Motivator that many students and lecturers feel stimulated, and improve their time on task, when using the internet, the internet and its world wide web (www) provide a variety range of study methods and contains many resources such as broadcast, video conferencing, virtual classroom, recording ….etc (Shendy, 2009, Deyaab, 2008, Nagar, 2006). On the other hand, there is some challenges that face e learning as Impersonal Communication, beside many students and academics in tourism education are suffering from information overload and most tourism web sites related to promotion aspects to attract potential visitors and not to educate tourism students and they make efforts to reaches what he/she search for. Also, the students and academics in tourism education should have operational internet skills, in addition to general computer skill. Lack of these skills represents a dangers challenge for both of them and to effectively tourism education process (Yasser, 2006)& Galal, 2005 & Essam, 2004)

According to (Awad, 2007) and to (www.tjtaylor.net) The most three pillars that determine the success or failure of blended e learning according to Social Cognitive Theory are

(1) Person which includes staff members and students and both of them must have the prerequisite knowledge and skills necessary to participate in e learning.
(2) Environment which It includes Faculties and universities and they must support e learning system by offering good infrastructure, a supportive culture, incentives, models, resources and fostering e learning self-efficacy.
(3) Belief and behavior that Students must have a high e learning self efficacy and the appropriate behavioral skills such as taking responsibility for learning, Time management.

Figure (1) Social cognitive theory

Source: www.tjtaylor.net
From literature on quality of e-learning and Usoro and Abid (2008) we can conclude nine factors for typical quality e-learning in higher education. Tangibles, Competence, Attitude, Content, Delivery, Reliability, Globalization, Community of practice, Vision, Strategies and plans. The research will select the second factor of e-learning quality which refers to the quality of lecturers and learners and technical support which they receive, but according to (Elshemy, 2008) it refers to the readiness of human capital to apply e-learning and these aspects affect their satisfaction such as interaction and feedback. E-readiness defined from researcher to researcher as the degree to which a given society, social group or organization is aware of, prepared and adjusted to use new technologies and according to Tarvid, (2008) e-readiness is readiness to grant high quality IT services that satisfy users of different IT proficiency levels. Moreover, Ali, M. Yusuf (2007) added that there are many components for e-readiness, namely: E-Commerce, E-Government, E-Learning, E-Payment, E-Health, E-Business/E-Marketing. The research will focus on e-learning as it represents its most crucial components for the study and represent the topic of the research.

Measuring e-readiness

There are many models which measure e-readiness, according to McConnell (2001) & the United Nations Development program report (2005) & Economist Intelligent unit, (2007) and Machado (2007) the e-readiness of a country can be measured by assessing the status and progress of interrelated attributes, where each of these measures includes a number of indicators that would help in assessing process and all models include the Human resources (Administration, Instructor, student, etc.)

In addition, Chapnick (2000), Hary (2002), Kaur and Abas (2006) designed a models for measuring the e-learning readiness of an institution in some categories and researcher see that all of them carry the same mean but different terms and all of them also contain the personnel, staff, learners and some of experts agree with him who the researcher discussed with them (E-learning units managers at the four universities which contain the sample (Fayoum, Alex., Helwan and Menia). These categories are: Psychological readiness, environment readiness, human resources, equipment readiness, Content readiness, technological skill, Sociological readiness, financial readiness. Staff members, learners and personnel were checked as they are a very important because the researcher believes that these items should be considered as very important in any e-learning assessment process and this accepted with Jeanne Schreurs (2004), Cengiz and Deniz (2007), and Sadik (2007) who see that the most important readiness for successful e-learning is the sufficient readiness of the student, teacher and technology.

1.2 Measuring Student’s e-readiness

No one can deny that learning can benefit from good quality learning resources, high quality learning is the result of many factors, the nature and quality of the learning experience including the nature of the assessment activities, and the nature and quality of feedback and support that is available to students. Students must be e-ready so that a coherent achievable strategy that is designed to meet their needs may be implemented (Infodev, 2003) & (Tarvid, 2008) & Shendy (2009) and Student readiness entails three dimensions to assess and measure:

The first dimension (technical skills)

The learner’s computer or technical skills that for participating in e-learning system, the students must have some familiarity and comfort with using a computer for personal or work-related activities, (Eom, Ketcherside & Lee, 2004) & omran (2007) and Dahshory, 2007. This means also the more experience a student has in using basic computer skills as: Use of networks especially the internet, word processing and other software applications. Ability to upload and download files, use of the www and email, accessing online library and other resources databases, experience with online
forums and other discussion and communications applications and other foundational requirements include access to a stable internet connection and dependable computer (http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art45966.asp) and (Volery & Lord, 2005) These students who have this experience in information technology will generally be more successful in online learning environment than those who do not.

The second dimension (learning skills)

Readiness is fortified by the ability to work independently that Cooper (2002) & Mahdey (2009) pointed out that independent learners have the potentials to be successful in online learning, however those lacking in the skills to study independently will not react well in the online environment. Under such conditions, institutions implementing e learning must be aware that students will react differently to the changing paradigm of the learning and rather than implement changes across the board, should aim to offer courses tailored specifically towards different learning styles. Beside, a study conducted at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, the successful e learner must have qualities as that the learner should have self motivation to learn that Greg & Jia, (2004)& Abdallah, 2006) also indicate that learning participation theories are coherently linked with learning motivational theories because no participation and completion should be expected without having motivation to learn, they defined motivation as the psychological feature that causes an individual to behave in a certain predefined goals and the researcher see that motivation refers to desire, attention and effort required to complete a learning task, in addition the learner should be also mature enough reading and writing skills, proactive approach to learn, open minded, self disciplined accepting of critical thinking. In addition willing to work and share discussion, be collaboratively and trusting of the online experience (Awad, B., 2007). And Affify (2008) add the learner also should be prepared to accept challenge and decision making to actively participate in the course process and in the social life, since the online learning eliminates the barriers between the classmates. Lastly, (Bryn John, 2007) say that the learner should become more productive in accomplished tasks, developing interest in improving own skills and problem identification, ability to frame, analyses and solve problems, beside interpersonal and collaborative skills that demonstrating teamwork and leadership, adapting to varied roles, responsibilities, working productively with other and implementing and communicating new ideas to others, self direction which means monitoring one’s own understanding and learning needs locating appropriate resources, transferring learning from one domain to another.

The third dimension (Time management behaviors)

The term (Time Management) is widely used for many types of time managing activities. May be the best known context of this term is Personal time management which refer to the set of habits (defined as consistent, often unconscious pattern of behavior, as intersection of knowledge, skills and desire). (Awad,2007)& (Foltynek,2008), Although the personal time management plays an a key role in the educational process efficiency, there are also some other meanings of this term, referring mostly to the course time management and possibilities of an e learning system, which influences both teachers and students. In addition, time management is one of the most traditional topics in the field of learning and study strategies, occupying a central position in the course and numerous handbooks on study and it is well known that time is money, and so if we want e learning to save money, we have to use it in the way saving the time for both students and tutors.

Several studies pointed out and proved that one of the most frequent complaints made by students about their teachers is that they do not have enough time to carry out all the tasks assigned to them in the different academic areas, both in high school as well as college. The students usually point out that there are many classes, projects, reading assignments, exam preparations, etc. that require constant dedication over a long period of time (Bertea, 2009). Beside, the recognition of time management as an effective tool in the academic area has led to the development of the theoretical models of this psychological construct, among these models: A model includes three interrelated levels: Selection of objectives / Sub objectives and setting priorities for them, Generating and prioritizing tasks and subtasks based on the objectives, Elaborating a list of tasks, planning, and carrying them out. Maccany (2004) developed a scale directed towards college students, The Time Management Behavior Scale.
(TMBS) that evaluates four complementary dimensions of time management: Establishing objectives and priorities, Making up timetables and lists of activities, Perceived time control and Organization preference. Readiness is clear when a learner can plan a safety plan of time for participation and study within their existing lifestyle and commitments. This obviously requires a respectable level of commitment and discipline to manage time over the long term in order to complete the course (Awad, B., 2007 and http://www.pentance.chem.uniec.edu:8900/) that in the case of ordinary learning situation, the planning and time management is being done for the student by curriculum administration department. But in case of e learning course, the student him or herself has to take active role in it and that requires much more self discipline (Gerda, 2007). From above and literature review we can conclude the e readiness framework for human capital especially students in figure (3)

![](image)

Figure (3) e-readiness framework for Human capital

II.

2.1 Methodology

Determining students’ e readiness for e learning represents an important stage in predicting of applying e learning system effectively in higher education especially at faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt. The data collection was carried out entirely in Egypt through primary data from interview based on questionnaire, conducted with 62 students were selected simple randomly from 378 students with 95% confidence level at four faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt, and secondary data from journals, books, conferences, internet, as well as periodicals, male 43(69.4 %) and 19 (30.6 %)
female, from different educational disciplines and levels, who were studying at different locations across Egypt to assess the Egyptian students e readiness in order to incorporate e learning effectively within the undergraduate stages at Fayoum, Helwan, Menia and Alex faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt. Also descriptive evaluative approach that handles the current phenomena as they are in the real field, whether by quantitative or qualitative methods based on (Attia, 2003) & (Tewfik, 2006) and Beaver, 2004. That principal purpose of the descriptive method is to evaluate things and conditions in their natural cases.

### 2.2 Results and analysis

On February 2010 the researcher began his analysis of the interview using simple statistical and mathematical techniques as SPSS program version 17 where findings are demonstrated using tables, in addition to researcher’s comments that have resulted from analysis of the interview answers. The level of student’s e readiness was been analyzed using often Five Likert scale (5=strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree). Also Frequencies, standard deviation (Std), means, and t test were used in analyzing process beside, a cronbach coefficient. The analysis provided the faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt with an insight into the participant’s performance towards critical information needed by the students to their e readiness to implement e learning effectively. Moreover, the critical analysis of the student’s knowledge, experiences and skills was deemed extremely important in the evaluation of the current statue of e learning at faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt as it assisted the students in reinforcing or modifying themselves to the best to apply e learning system effectively to meet industry needs.

#### (1) Technical skills dimension

From the table (1) it is found that 1.6% of respondents strongly disagree on the first item, while 53.2% disagree which means that they have not the ability to use the networks especially the internet while on the second item, it is found that also the same percent of disagree and strongly disagree which indicate that they have not skills in software applications but 43.5% are agree and 1.6% are strongly agree and they have the ability and skills in some software applications, while the third item about 46.8% are disagree and 1.6 are strongly disagree which means that they have not the ability to download and upload files, this indicate that they do not use the computer in learning which is an important in the online learning. The forth item 17.7% of respondents are disagree and 1.6% are strongly disagree which mean that they do not have the ability to use www and have not e mail and cannot use it. Furthermore the fifth item indicates that 40.3% of despondences are disagree and 37.1% are strongly disagree which means they do not use online library and they use the traditional library which means that they still go to the library and read book and could borrow it for some times and some say that there is shortage in the faculty infrastructure for accessing online library at the university. In sixth item around 32.3% are agree and 33.9% are strongly disagree which means that they have not experience with online forums and other discussions and communications applications which online learning depend basically on it to avoid face to face interactions. Seventh item 29% of despondences do not have a stable internet connections and dependable computer and they show the reasons to high costs of these things and low income of their families and it consider the basic requirements of online learning. Eighth item 48.4% are disagree and 21.0% are strongly disagree which means that they do not look forward to learn more new techniques or trying to learn it and this is because of unawareness of the importance of the new technology and the faculties do not make any workshops with students to show them the importance of information technology in many fields especially the education and they take only in their study an introduction of information technology. About 16.1% of despondences are disagreeing and 1.6% are strongly disagree on the item nine which means they do not know how to connect to internet. 11.3% are disagree which means that their faculties do not have enough infrastructures for the students which influences in applying e learning system in these faculties especially effectively e learning. On the tens items around 54.8% of the students are disagree and 16.1% strongly disagree that means they are not the first who use the new technology. Around 72.6% of respondents on the item eleventh item do not receive any questions from their colleagues when they have problem with their computers which means that they have not enough experience with computer skills. On the twelfth item around 61.3% of the students do not use
any e learning programs, on the other hand, about 38.7% of them are using Blended online learning which means face to face and e courses via internet using learning management systems (LMS) Moodle belong to the Egyptian e learning centre which is related to ministry of higher education, but it is in the infant stages and they do not use e course and still buy and use the traditional book. From all the above we can say that there is a shortage and insufficient in technical skills for the respondents students.

(2) Learning Skills dimensions

From the table (2) we can find that 62.9% of the students on the first item do not have the skills to study independent because they have used to depend on the teacher in the period before higher education and on the lecturer on the higher education. Beside, on the second item it is found that 51.6% are disagree and 3.2% are strongly disagree which means that they do not have the motivation to use information technology in education (learn online), majority of students have reading and writing skills, only 30.6% do not have. In addition 62.9% are disagree and 6.5% are strongly disagree which means that they do not have self disciplined and do not accept the critical thinking. Furthermore, about 61.3% disagree and 3.2% are strongly disagreeing that mean that they are not trust of the online experience. Also 51.6% of the respondents are disagreeing and 11.3% are disagreeing which means they do not have the ability to accept the challenges and decision making to participate in the course. Beside, 41.9% of the students are disagree and 19.4% are strongly disagree which means that these students do not have an interest to improve their own skills, analyses and solving problems. Lastly high percentages of the students do not have the willing to share discussion, knowledge and implementing new ideas with others. From all the above we can say that there is a shortage and insufficient in learning skills for the respondents students.

(3) Time management behavior dimension

In table(3), it is showed that 46.8% of respondents are disagree and 3.2% are strongly disagree which means that these students do not establish their objectives and priorities, and 69.4% are disagree on the second item and 4.8% are strongly disagree that they do not make up timetables and lists of activities, beside 58.1% are disagree and 11.3% are strongly disagree which means that they do not have a respectable level of commitment and discipline to plan and manage time during their study and 16.1% do not prefer organization. From all the above we can say that there is a shortage and insufficient in Technical skills, Learning skills and Time management behaviors skills for the respondents students. This agreed and improved corrective positively the research hypothesis which says that there is a shortage and insufficient e readiness for students for e learning. In addition, Using Cronbach’s alpha to measure the reliability of the results, it is found its loading 0.957 which means that the study results are reliable (table 4). Furthermore, Using T test to test the significance of the items included in the study. it appears from table (5) that $P$ less than 0.01 which means that results are significant.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, Researchers have listed the items found in literature review which many researchers have agreed it. And the initial interview questions were piloted on 15 students. And to ensure Reliability A Cronbach alpha test was made. also Making interview achieve the reliability and credibility of research data according to Frank, 2007 and Peter 2008.

III. Conclusions

The main purpose of this research was to measure the student’s e readiness for e learning at faculties of tourism and hotels in Fayoum, Menia, Alex. and Helwan. Three dimensions we included in our analysis: Technical skills, Learning skills and Time management behavior skills. Male and female have Results have showed that there is a shortage and insufficient e readiness for students at
these faculties so the study recommends that for effective e learning the students have to improve their skills to meet the requirements of e learning system especially.

Future Research

Future research should extend to the entire faculties and institutions of tourism and hotels at higher education in Egypt to get better representation of the whole population.

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