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INTERENT USAGE AMONG FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES IN FERDOWSI UNIVRSITY, IRAN

TOKTAM NAMAYANDEH JOORABCHI

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INTERENT USAGE AMONG FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES IN FERDOWSI UNIVRSITY, IRAN

By

TOKTAM NAMAYANDEH JOORABCHI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

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IN THE NAME OF GOD

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my beloved family; my father, my mother, Mohammad Reza who always understand and give me loving support

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my wonderful parents who have raised me to be the person I am today. You have provided me with support emotionally and financially throughout this long term journey. You have been a great source of much more than physical and emotional support. You have been with me every step of the way, through good time and bad. Thank you for unconditional love, guidance, and support that you have always given me, helping me succeed and instilling in me the confidence that I am doing anything I put my mind to. And also my brother who guide and support with excellent suggestions. Finally, this thesis is dedicated to all those who believe in the richness of learning.

Abstract of thesis as presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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Chairman: Professor Md. Salleh Hj. Hassan, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

The importance of the public use of Internet has noticeably increased in people's daily life. Internet, regarding its potential possibilities has attracted most Internet users' prominent attention specially, students. The significant portions of students who use the Internet are females. They involve with the Internet based on their needs for accessing information, satisfying their leisure activities, transferring their information, making communication with others and so forth.

This study was designed by applying the Use and Gratification theory framework to understand the Internet usage among female undergraduate students. The objectives of this study are to identify the relationship between the pattern of Internet usage, attitude

towards Internet, English language knowledge, field of studies, Internet skills, problems and purpose of using Internet with the gratification of Internet usage.

The present study used a survey design to achieve the objectives of the study. Non-probability sampling was employed in this study. The purposive sampling method was chosen for this study because the subjects were selected based on the specific demographical characteristics such as gender, age, education level, not working and using the Internet. A total of 319 respondents participated in the study in which 62 are from the field of English language and 257 from the other fields of humanities.

Five categories of gratification for using the Internet were identified, namely, *Escape, Affective, Cognitive, Social Integration,* and *Personal Integration.* Most of the female undergraduate students used Internet for searching and getting knowledge. Finding relevant information for research was the most important purpose for students. They mostly search in Persian Google.com. The most common problem of using the Internet is that it takes too long time to download the Internet pages. The most common gratification of using the Internet was related to information gathering and learning new things.

This study found no significant relationship between numbers of years in using the Internet with gratification of Internet usage. However, the relationships between attitude, purpose and frequency of Internet usage with gratifications of Internet usage are significant and positive.

Abstrak tesis ini dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai

memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains.

**Penggunaan Internet Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Wanita Peringkat Bacelor
Universiti Ferdowsi, Iran**

Oleh

TOKTAM NAMAYAMDE JOORANCHI

Oktober 2009

Pengerusi :   **Profesor Md. Salleh Hj. Hassan, PhD**

Fakulti :   **Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi**

Penggunaan Internet yang kian meluas menjadikan ianya sangat penting dalam

kehidupan harian setiap orang. Internet menurik minat ramai penggura terutamanya

pelajor perkembangan yang begitu pantas menjadikan wanita antara pengguna yang

paling ramai di dalam penggunaan Internet. *Int*ernet telah diadaptasi oleh para pengguna

Internet untuk mencari pelbagai informasi yang dikehendaki, menyisi masa lapang,

memberi informasi , dun berhubung dengan orang lain.

Kajian ini menggunakan Teori Penggunaan dan Pemuasan Kehendak (*Uses and

Gratification Theory*) untuk memahami kegunaan Internet di kalangan pelajar wanita.

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti hubungan antara pola penggunaan

Internet, sikap terhadap penggunaan Internet, pengetahuan di dalam Bahasa Inggeris,

bidang pengajian dan kemahiran menggunakan Internet serta masalah dan tujuan ketika melayari Internet dengan gratifikasi penggunaan Internet.

Persampelan bukan kebarangkalian telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Untuk kajian ini persampelan bertujuan digunakan kerana subjek dipilih adalah berdasarkan kawasan yang ditentukan. Seramai 319 orang responden menyertai kriteria kajian ini di mana 62 orang adalah dalam jurusan Bahasa Inggeris dan 257 lagi merupakan pelajar jurusan kemanusiaan.

Lima kategori gratifikasi telah dikenalpasti dalam penggunaan Internet iaitu *Escape*, *Affective*, *Cognitive*, *Social Integration* dan *Personal Integration*. Kebanyakan pelajar wanita menggunakan Internet untuk mencari dan mendapatkan ilmu pengetahuan tentang sesuatu perkara. Bagi para pelajar, memperolehi sesuatu informasi yang relevan dalam kajian adalah satu tujuan yang penting. Kebanyakan pelajar ini menggunakan enjin carian Google yang menggunakan bahasa Parsi. Masalah yang sering dihadapi ketika menggunakan Internet ialah tahap kelajuan yang sangat rendah ketika memuat turun laman tersebut. Gratifikasi utama responden adalah menggunakan Internet berkaitan denangan pencarian maklumat dan mempalajari sesuatu yang baru.

Melalui kajian ini didapati tiada perkaitan yang signifikan antara kemahiran menggunakan Internet serta tempoh melayari Internet dengan gratifikasi. Akan tetapi terdapat hubungan yang positif dan signifikan antara sikap, tujuan dan kekerapan menggunakan Internet dan gratifikasi menggunakan Internet.

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In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most merciful. All praises and thanks are to Allah, the lord of the universe and all that exist.

Working on the thesis project is one of the most rewarding things that ever happen to me during the two years at Graduate school. It is difficult to adequately convey the depth of my gratitude to the many people who participated in this project by virtue of their generous and encouragement.

First of all, I give thanks and honour to God for sustaining me through the various trials, setbacks, and rewards that I have encountered along the way and for allowing this project to be brought to completion.

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Special thanks go to my committee members, Professor. Musa Abu Hassan, not only for all the constructive comments to keep me ever focused on the principles of good research, but also all the encouragement he has given me in the past two years.

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My sincerest thanks go to my family who supported me with their advice and finance. They offered me great help all along out. I could not advance the goal in my life without their support.

There have been countless others who have contributed in part of the completion of this work and collectively to the development of my mind and spirit. The chain of my gratitude would be definitely incomplete if I would forget to thank the first cause of this chain, using Aristotle's words, The Prime Mover. My deepest and sincere gratitude for inspiring and guiding this humble being.

I would also like to acknowledge Azadeh Asgari who is the best of my friend in my educational and social life. She always shows me the way to be the best in every aspect in my life. I appreciate her support and help. I am also grateful to another friend, Somayeh Mortazavi and Narges Bani Najarian who provide advice for me on the research.

I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 26 October 2009 to conduct the final examination of Toktam Namayandeh Joorabchi on her Master of Science thesis entitled "Internet usage among Female Undergraduate in Ferdowsi University, Iran" in accordance with Universiti Putra Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulation 1981. The Committee recommend that the student be awarded the degree of Master of Science.

Member of the Examination Committee are as follows:

Megat Al-Imran Yassin, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Univeriti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Siti Zobidah Omar, PhD
Associate Prof. Dr.
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Univeriti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Ezhar Tmam, PhD
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Univeriti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Azizah Hamzah
Professor
Faculty of Art and Social Science
University of Malaya
(External Examiner)

Bujang Kim Huat, PhD
Professor and Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
University Putra Malaysia

Date:

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and been accepted in partial as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Md. Salleh Hj. Hassan, PhD
Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Musa Bin Abu Hassan
Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

HASSANAH MOHD GHAZALI, PhD
Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 11February 2010

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotation and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previous or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

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TOKTAM NAMAYANDEH JOORABCHI

Date:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADSL	A Sysmmetrical Digital Subscriber Line
AHRD	Academy of Human Resource Development
ARPA	Advance Research Project Agency
ASPs	Access Service Providers
BBS	British Broadcasting System
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
DCCI (DCI)	Communication Company of Iran
DNS	Domain Name Server
EU	European Union
Gbps	Giga bits per seconds
HRD	Human Resource Development
HTML	Hyper-Text Markup Language
HTTP	Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol
IM	Instant Message
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICPs	Internet Connection Providers
IMP	Interface Message Processor
IRC	Internet Relay Chat
IPM	Institutes for studies in theoretical Physics and Mathematics
IP	Internet Protocol
ISPs	Internet Service Providers
IT	Information Technology
Mbps	Mega Bits per seconds
MERIT	Middle East Review of International Affairs
NCP	Network Control Protocol
NIC	Network Information Center

MUDs	Multi Users Dungeons
NCP	Network Control Protocol
NSF	National Science Foundation
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
PTA	Personal Travel Assistant
PTT	Post, Telephone, Telegraph
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SRI	Stanford Research Institution
TCI	Telecommunication Company of Iran
WWW	World Wide Web

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with background of the study, problem statement and research questions, followed by research objectives, significance of the study, limitations of the study and definition of terms.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Without doubt the Internet is the fastest growing communication technology today (Dlodlo and Sithole, 2001). According to Internet World Stats, as of December 30, 2007, 1.319 billion people have used the Internet. The Internet revolution has brought effective changes to the area of education (Luan, Fung, Nawawi and Hong, 2005). The use of communication technology is also growing rapidly in colleges and universities. The assumption about the Internet is that it benefits the college students tremendously and learning appears to be a rich field that is just beginning to be discovered. According to Owston (1997), educators around the globe have shown a great interest in the World Wide Web more than any other recent technologies.

Therefore, the Internet or the World Wide Web (www or Web) has become extremely popular. The use of Web technologies is now expanding into education. Scholars and educators have already realized some of the potential of Web technology in teaching and learning. However, past successes of Web utilisation were dependent upon users' attitudes toward the Web (Daugherty & Funke, 1998).

The Internet appears to be one of the fastest growing means of communication in history. More people have faster access to a greater amount of information than ever before with using the Internet. Effectively, it offers an affordable and easy way to get and also distribute information. Using the Internet allows people to access databases, library catalogues, commercial services and government. The Internet applications are in the form of hypertext pages that provide combined services such as text, audio, video, graphics and animation. All these together have made the internet very rich as a source. The new millennium has set in the state of art in the field of information and communication technology (ICT) converged into one entity. The Internet, for instance has surpassed all forms of communication media (Buyong & Idid, 1999).

Almost, the half of Iran citizens is women who are considered as the important human resources. During last decade, women's in the society dramatically promoted because of their merits and abilities, so that, more than 60 percent of students who are accepted in the university contains of female. This is true for university chosen for the research. Living in the world surrounded by the Internet encourages women to use it for responding whatever they need. Internet helps them understand the world better and enables them to gratify most kinds of their needs.

The goal of this study is to gain an understanding of Internet usage among female undergraduates as a resource to fulfill the purposes of their internet surfing. Ferdowsi University was chosen as the location of the study and Use and Gratification theory (U&G) was suggested as the framework for the current research to analyse the purposes, patterns, problems and attitudes towards internet. The Use

and Gratification theory has a long history within the field of communication investigation and has proven to be a useful model for researching how and why people use certain communication media. The U&G theory can be a starting point for studying students' internet usage in real surfing behaviour.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The major concern of information technology, as we live in the information age, is the use of computers to convert data into useful information in making decisions (Tatnall et al., 2003). The recent and rapid growth of the Internet in Iran has been perceived as a potential boom in many aspects. All sorts of information are available on the Internet, which is being adopted for many purposes.

Lack of information creates a negative impact on our lives, particularly on the educated layer of the society. The Internet is one of the most important mass media in the world and it changes the world in many aspects. Students are the most important group in society because they would be building the society in the future, especially the female students who have a huge effect on society even at home. Developing countries are known for the high rate of educated women in university. Women who use the Internet tend to be more open-minded than those who not use the Internet.

The scholars of the theory of Use and Gratification have conducted research on the purpose of female undergraduate using mass media and how their needs are fulfilled by their exposure to particular media. Palmgreen (1984) mentions that people select

media which closely match their needs and interests. This means that the use of the Internet is operated by choice, but the selection of specific contents would also depend on users' interests.

As individuals request for better use of their World Wide Web (WWW) resources, the effects of English language knowledge on using the Internet and the gratification for using it is a fundamental issue. A number of studies have been conducted to explore Internet usage among students or WWW within the scope of the Use and Gratification theory. This study is an attempt to fill the gap in literature by identifying users' attitudes, purposes, patterns and problems in the use of the Internet.

Access to the Internet is the pre condition to log on to World Wide Web. Internet experience and computers skills may influence users' website usage and Gratification level. According to Novak, Hoffman and Yung (2000), Internet skills are positively related to how long an individual has been using the Internet.

The Internet is one of the popular media in Iran, but there are many problems in using it which may make the big knowledge gap between those who have high-tech Internet and those do not have. Informing the problems and considering them can help the related responsible eliminate them and develop appropriate ways to improve students' skills in using Internet.

Most information stored in the Internet is in English specially, academic data. It must be acknowledged that English is most common language that is increasingly