



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED USEFULNESS, EASE OF USE  
AND SATISFACTION AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS  
TOWARDS THE UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA WEBSITE**

**SOMAYEH MORTAZAVI GANJI KETAB**

**FBMK 2009 7**



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**By**

**SOMAYEH MORTAZAVI GANJI KETAB**

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

**July 2009**



## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving parents who have supported me  
all the way since the beginning of my studies.  
Without their knowledge, wisdom, and guidance,  
I would not have the goals I have to strive  
and be the best to reach my dreams.



Abstract of thesis 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: Megat Al-Imran Yasin, PhD**

**Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication**

An international university can communicate better with foreign users by an easy and useful website which its content replies to all students' information needs. The lack of sufficient information for international students may happen in that kind of bilingual websites which all information has not been translated equally in both languages and the national language is dominant. This research aims to measure the level of ease of use and usefulness of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) website in order to know the foreign students' expectation and satisfaction with it and evaluate the content from the users' point of view.

The questionnaire survey was employed as the instrument for data collection in this study. Simple Random sampling technique was applied in the sample selection of the respondents. A self-administered questionnaire was designed as a research instrument in survey section. A total of 328 international



students participated in the survey conducted in the Universiti Putra Malaysia. The return response rate was 92.1 percent. Statistical techniques engaged in survey study included frequency distribution, descriptive analysis statistics and Spearman rho Correlation coefficient.

The results revealed that the level of ease of use and usefulness of the UPM website was high among international students. As the UPM website had English language problem for users, but they were satisfied with it and could communicate with website. Additionally, the findings indicated that there is a moderate correlation between ease of use of the UPM website and the international students' satisfaction, as the correlation between usefulness and users' satisfaction was high.

It can be concluded that the respondents of this study perceived UPM website useful and easy to use and they are satisfied with it. Meaning an easy and useful technology has effects on users to accept or reject it. Based on this study a useful academic website with rich content is more interesting than an easy website for students. They expected to have access to a complete university website in order to answer to all information needs with more detailed information and it should be the first reference to get information from.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**HUBUNGKAIT ANTARA ANDAIAN KEPENGUNAAN, KEMUDAHAN  
PENGUNAAN DAN KEPUASAN PELAJAR ANTARABANGSA  
TERHADAP WEB UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Universiti antarabangsa boleh berhubung secara lebih berkesan dengan pengguna luar menerusi laman web yang berinformasi dan boleh menjawab segala persoalan dan kehendak para pelajar. Laman web dwibahasa yang tidak diterjemah dengan baik dan lebih cenderung kepada bahasa kebangsaan akan menyebabkan ia kekurangan informasi. Kaji selidik ini bertujuan untuk mengukur tahap kemudahan dan kegunaan laman web Universiti Putra Malaysia bagi mengetahui tahap kepuasan dan harapan pelajar antarabangsa.

Soalan-soalan telah dibina sendiri sebagai instrument kajian di dalam bahagian kajian selidik. Teknik rawak mudah pula telah digunakan dalam pemilihan responden. Kaedah yang menggabungkan soalan kaji selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data. Seramai 328 pelajar antarabangsa telah mengambil bahagian di dalam kaji selidik ini yang. Kadar maklum balas yang

diterima adalah sebanyak 92.1 peratus. Teknik statistik yang digunakan di dalam kaji selidik ini termasuk pengagihan frekuensi, statistik analisis deskriptif dan Korelasi Spearman rho.

Keputusan-keputusan daripada kaji selidik menunjukkan bahawa tahap kemudahan dan penggunaan laman web Universiti Putra Malaysia adalah tinggi di kalangan pelajar-pelajar antarabangsa. Walaupun laman web Universiti Putra Malaysia mempunyai masalah Bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan penggunanya, namun para pelajar tetap berpuas hati dan masih dapat menggunakan laman web tersebut. Tambahan pula, dapatan menunjukkan bahawa terdapat kolerasi sederhana di antara kemudahan penggunaan laman web Universiti Putra Malaysia dan kepuasan para pelajar antarabangsa sebagaimana korelasi di antara kegunaan dan kepuasan pengguna adalah tinggi. Ini bermakna, para pelajar lebih tertarik dengan laman web akademik yang penuh berinformasi berbanding laman web yang ringkas. Mereka berharap dapat menggunakan laman web universiti sepenuhnya bagi mendapatkan informasi yang diperlukan secara terperinci.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, I am indeed thankful to Allah (God) for giving me the inner strength, courage and blessings to initiate proceed and finally complete this thesis. Next, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to a great number of people who provided me valuable assistance in finalizing this academic exercise.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Chairman of the Supervisory Committee, Dr. Megat AL-Imran Yasin for offering constructive ideas and constant guidance throughout the preparation of this thesis. I would also wish Prof. Dr. Musa Abu Hassan for sharing his expertise and providing kind assistance in accomplish this challenging task.

I also would like to acknowledge the friendship and intellectual assistance given to by the lecturers in faculty of Modern Languages and Communication for their meaningful comments and suggestions to improve my thesis.





I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 31 July 2009 to conduct the final examination of Somayeh Mortazavi Ganji Ketab on her thesis entitled "Relationship between Perceived Usefulness, Ease of Use and Satisfaction of International Students towards Universiti Putra Malaysia Website" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

---

**SOMAYEH MORTAZAVI GANJI KETAB**

Date:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
MAMPU	-	Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit
PEOU	-	Perceived Ease of Use
PU	-	Perceived Usefulness
TAM	-	Technology Acceptance Model
UPM	-	Universiti Putra Malaysia

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background and basic ideas of this study, and they are organized under the following topics: 1) background of study, 2) statement of the research problem, 3) research questions, 4) research objectives, 5) significance of the study, 6) scope and limitation and 7) definition of terms.

### **Background of the Study**

In the world of information and communication, the best thing that human being needs is to gain the right and useful information in order to make decision. Due to this, it is important to study about human demands in the age of new information and communication technologies (ICT). These technologies created for people not only to communicate to each other but also help them to get useful and practical information for decision making in different situations.

One of these technologies is the Internet which is a useful source in getting information. More than 10 years since the coding language for the World Wide Web (WWW) was developed, educational institutions, research centers, libraries, government agencies, commercial enterprises, advocacy groups,



and a multitude of individuals have rushed to connect to the Internet (Phipps and Merisotis, 2000).

The appearance of the Internet and the WWW has changed many things especially scholarly communication for publishing scientific material and offering information about institutions on the net (Onyancha and Ocholla, 2006). One of the most common services of the Internet is the World Wide Web. The WWW has become one of the major sources of information on academic and research activities. The Internet has potential in a number of areas which has been realized as:

- A facility for communication between individuals and groups: the original academic purpose of the Internet.
- Providing online access to useful information such as databases and directories: appearance of the Internet makes these facilities more available.
- An important tool for representing or promoting the provider for marketing in organizations (Middleton, McConnell and Davidson, 1999).

Studies indicate that the websites are becoming significant communication medium for science and scholarship (Cronin and Mckim, 1996), so it seems obvious that the Internet and WWW has deeply influenced the society in general, and universities and colleges in particular.

Nowadays the web has proven to be much more than a service, instead it has become a suitable way of offering services in different areas, such as



entertainment, communication, education, and so forth. When it comes to the education especially in the world of information and communication, the web can show itself in many aspects. As Noruzi (2005) noted institutions of higher learning, and especially universities, utilize the websites to enable the performance of activities such as: announcing the existence and promoting the achievements of individuals, research groups, institutes and departments; providing online library catalogues; disseminating findings, either by hosting online articles or by publishing summaries, data sets or tools.

When universities and their departments are using the website, it can help them to establish communication processes between educational institutions and their audiences. According to Middleton, McConnell and Davidson (1999), a university website can be practical for staff and students in order to do research teach and communicate, and it can be a useful tool to advertise the institution. In fact the website changes the traditional form of distributing the information by enhancing speed, convenience and accessibility.

Website is a modern communication facility which can reach multitudinous target audiences at little cost; and the information it displays can be updated continually and accessed any time by the users (Toro, 2002). The most important factor which is needed to mention here about the university website or even the other academic website is that, "Who is the audience?" or "Who is going to obtain the information from the site?" and "What kind information is s/he looking for?" As a matter of fact the audiences for an academic website

are vast. The site developers should take these kinds of information seekers into consideration in designing their home pages.

University sites have numerous potential audiences who are current students, future (or prospective) students, faculty & staff, parents, alumni & friends, visitors, local community (Schwandt, 2005).

After considering the different users, it is time for categorizing the content of the university website according to the audience's needs. As Toro (2002) mentioned "In such a wide interactive world, where the transmission of the information that guides a consumer's final decision depends largely on the content and image transmitted through a web site, web development should be treated with the importance it deserves." So the website developers should know what the users are exactly looking for and how they can get it in the easiest way. Of course the users do not want to have encumbrance in seeking the information on the website and that is the main point which is necessary to consider in designing the content of the university website.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

As mentioned before for an academic institution or any others, it is a need to know "who" are its audiences before it can decide how best to serve them (Middleton, McConnell and Davidson, 1999).



Due to the vast of audiences of the university website, it is to reflect users' needs easily and satisfy the audiences, not confusing them in a store of different information. For this reason the website should contain different parts relevant to "internal" and "external" users. It means a website should be able to conduct the users via the "front door", and then the users can find out about the institution, while the internal pages concentrate on keeping staff and students informed of necessary information (Middleton, McConnell and Davidson, 1999).

One group of users who are seeking the information on the university website is current students. It contains two groups such as local and foreign students in international universities. This research focuses on a problem that may happen to those international students who are studying in non-English-speaking countries. The countries which their mother tongue is not English, but they use English as a second language.

The content of these universities' website is mixture of English and the main speaking language of that country. According to some studies on university websites, for example in Lund University (2007), it has seen that some web pages are mixture of Swedish and English, or the English pages contained less information than the equivalent Swedish pages for current international students, so the lack of information were criticized by them (Wedderburn, 2007).

In these kinds of websites the English pages often contain just a part and not the most recent information available. So users have to get the most detailed information by screening the pages in the local language and then try to navigate through the information they are looking for.

This research concentrates on Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) as an international university which its website is bilingual and designed for local and international students. Malaysia is one of the non-English-speaking countries which tries to attract foreign students in its universities. So when it comes to bilingual websites, web masters should pay more attention to categorizing and publishing web content based on different users' needs.

According to the study in Lund University (2007), it seems the content of these kinds of websites must evaluate from the users' point of view, in order to find out the usefulness and ease of use of them. The main task of any website is to provide right and complete information to fulfill its responsibility, so evaluation of users' perception can reveal whether the content was practical for them or not.

Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) is one the theories that studied about the characteristics of an information system on users acceptance. So UPM website can be considered as an information system and its function can be studied through this research and based on TAM factors. Davis (1989) said perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) cause people to accept or reject an information technology.

It is expected the content of UPM website as an informative source could answer to the international students' demands, and they can find all the information in the shortest time and the easiest way. Then evaluating and analyzing users' perception towards this academic website can show their expectation and students needs.

The lack of information damages the content of the university website, so the users encounter with problem to find what they are looking for. A complicated website with non-practical information which are not up-to-date can not communicate with users and unable to fulfill their information enquiries as well. In addition, it seems there should be a relationship between the type of services that a website provides to its users and their satisfaction accordingly.

### **Research Questions**

This study contains five main questions which are going to answer them through this research:

- 1- What is the level of ease of use of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) website from the international students' perception?
- 2- What is the level of usefulness of the content of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) website based on the international students' perception?
- 3- Are the international students satisfied with the content of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) website?
- 4- Is there any relation between perceived ease of use of the university website and the international students' satisfaction?



5- Is there any relation between perceived usefulness of the university website and the international students' satisfaction?

### **Research Objectives**

This part contains two objectives such as general and specific objectives:

#### **General objective:**

To assess the relationship between perceived usefulness, ease of use and satisfaction of international students' towards Universiti Putra Malaysia website

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- To determine the level of ease of use of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) website from the international students' perception
- To determine the level of usefulness of the content of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) website from the international students' perception
- To determine the international students' satisfaction with the content of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) website
- To determine the relation between perceived ease of use of the university website and the international students' satisfaction
- To determine the relation between perceived usefulness of the university website and the international students' satisfaction