# ATTITUDINAL BELIEF ON ADOPTION OF E-MBA PROGRAM IN MALAYSIA

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## ABSTRACT

**E-learning describes the use of information communications technology for learning beyond the boundaries of the conventional classroom. The objective of this paper is to determine what are the factors that are significant in explaining intention towards e-learning, particularly e-MBA adoption in Malaysia. Results indicated that trialability and image were significant influencing behavior intention towards e-MBA adoption.**

**Keywords:** **attitudinal belief, behavior intention, higher learning, e-MBA.**

## INTRODUCTION

**Education has been the main focus of Malaysia. Way back before independent from the colonial, a group of elite Malays stressed the importance of education. Up to present moment, the nation is still considering education to be placed as the primary concern of the elected government. Education has been perceived as allocating a vital role in the development of Malaysia. Thus the nation's socio-politics and economy will grow in harmony as the population is educated.**

**Life long learning will becomes more prominent that ever as we move from e-economy towards k-economy (Asirvatham, 2003). In facing the wave of globalization, the notion on sharing of knowledge is vital toward nation's success of k-economy. In order for organization to be successful, emphasis should be given to knowledge sharing and knowledge creation. Thus e-learning can be used to promote the sharing and creation of knowledge. Further, by eliminating of time, distance, and socio-economic status, individuals can now take charge of their own lifelong learning (Asirvatham, 2003).**

**E-learning is the future methodology for mass education. It promises education and training at convenient times and places at minimal cost to the user and provider (Azmi, 2002). Further, Azmi (2002) stated that e-learning can be viewed as making learning materials such as handout or presentation slides available on the web; and some see e-learning as online learning with media-rich content, animation, high quality graphics, audio and video streaming, and synchronous interaction with instructors.**

**The rapid growth of Internet users will push institutions of higher learning to adopt e-learning solutions. Although e-learning has a potential to be the learning methodology for mass education in the future, the provider must understand what are the factors will influence the users' intention to adopt with the new technology. In term of new technology adoption and acceptance in education discipline, the program provider might face difficulties to predict why the potential user will accept or reject it. So, this paper will explore what are the factors that will influence their acceptance or rejection. There is lack of studies investigating in term of assessing the users' intention to adopt this new technology, particularly focused on the electronic Masters in Business Administration (e-MBA) adoption by students or universities. Further, the paper would help public and private universities and colleagues to understand what factors and causes is deterring users from adoption of e-learning and plan out paths to encourage the adoption of e-learning in higher learning institutions in the country.**

**The motivation of this paper will help to determine what are the factors that significant in explaining the intention towards e-learning, particularly e-MBA adoption in Malaysia. An attempt is made whether attitudinal belief such as perceived usefulness, result demonstrability, trialability, image, and enjoyment has relationship towards the e-MBA adoption. From the result of the paper, it will be able to understand better the factors affecting users' intention to adopt with e-learning, particularly with e-MBA. This is important to higher learning institutions either public or private to embark on programs that would be effective in encouraging Malaysian, especially young generation to adopt with e-learning in order to face globally competitiveness.**

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**People want to behave reasonably, and thus a consumer's attitude toward a certain technology is affected by attitudinal belief (Ajzen, 1991; Chang & Cheung, 2001; Davis, 1989; Jeong & Lambert, 2001; Karahanna et al., 1999; Kwon & Chidambaram, 2000; Choi et al., 2002). Attitudinal belief indicates the user's belief that technology possess a particular attribute or that a particular behavior will cause a particular result (Ajzen, 2001; Chang & Cheung, 2001). Thus attitude about the technology of e-learning is affected by attitudinal belief.**

**A person will perceive the new technology as useful when the person believes the existence of a positive user-performance relationship (Davis, 1989; Karahanna et al., 1999; Morris & Dillon, 1997; Segars & Grover, 1993; Choi et al., 2002). A plausible reason is that individuals will use the system only if they perceive that such usage would help them achieve the desired task performance. Therefore, if a user perceives that adopting e-MBA will be more useful than not, the person will have positive attitudinal belief e-MBA.**

**If a person can try out the technology before deciding to accept e-MBA, the person will develop a stronger attitudinal belief about the technology, either in a positive or in a negative way depending on the quality of the new technology (Karahanna et al., 1999; Venkatesh & Brown, 2001; Xia & Lee, 2000; Choi et al., 2002). Therefore, if a user has an**

**opportunity for trial usage before enroll with e-MBA program; the person will have positive attitudinal belief e-MBA.**

**Further, if probable result can be observed and are likely to be communicated by others, the attitude toward the technology will be stronger, either to the positive direction or to the negative toward the technology will be stronger, either to the positive direction or to the negative direction according to the quality of the new technology (Karahanna et al., 1999; Venkatesh & Brown, 2001; Xia & Lee, 2000). Therefore, it a user perceives to get the result of using e-MBA program explicitly, the person will have positive attitudinal belief e-MBA.**

**It is reasonable that if adopting e-MBA will enhance one's social image, the attitude toward adopting the new technology will be positive (Karahanna et al., 1999; Choi et al., 2002). Therefore if a user perceives that adopting e-MBA will shop the person's good image, then the person will have positive attitudinal belief e-MBA.**

**If the user can experience enjoyment through the adoption of new technology, attitude toward adoption will present positive (Kwon & Chindambaram, 2000; Sheth et al., 1991; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Venkatesh & Brown, 2001; Choi et al., 2002). A person will be motivated to do or repeat an activity which is enjoyable more as compared to the same activity which is not enjoyable. Furthermore, since through adoption of e-MBA program, user will no need for class attending and the person has more time. Therefore, is a user perceived that adopting e-MBA will give the feeling of enjoyment; the person will have positive attitudinal belief e-MBA.**

## RESEARCH DESIGN

**The research design is correlational in nature. It tries to examine the relative importance of the independent variables as the factors that contributing to the successful towards new technology adoption of e-MBA. Two hundred individuals were selected to participate in the survey through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling used to obtain desired information from specific target group. The target group came from individual possessing as a bachelor degree students or bachelor degree holder from various background of study. Each individual was asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire survey. There are two sections in the questionnaire, Section 1 was used to collect demographic information such as gender, ethnic, age, education level, profession, and income level. Meanwhile in Section 2, respondents were asked to rate their opinion using 5-point Likert scale. Thus thirty seven items from Choi et al. (2002) were adopted.**

**The selected site for this study is Penang. The reason for choosing this site is due to the relevance of its population to this study. This is due to the level of total internet subscribers in the third highest in Malaysia, and therefore Penang is regarded as a 'well-educated information society' (Shuib, 2003). Furthermore, many higher learning institutions are located in Penang including two public universities and 46 private colleges (Shuib, 2003).**

**The objective of this paper is to examine the relative importance of the independent variables as the factors that contributing to the successful towards new technology adoption of e-MBA. An attempt is made whether perceived usefulness, result demonstrability, trialability, image, and enjoyment will influence the behavior intention. Theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 1. The theoretical framework is adapted from the Choi et al. (2002) based on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The reasons of using this theory are (1) the model examine the factors that contributing to the potential user's**

**behavior intention towards the adoption information appliances, and (2) to test whether the model is applicable to be used in the Malaysian context specifically in the e-MBA.**

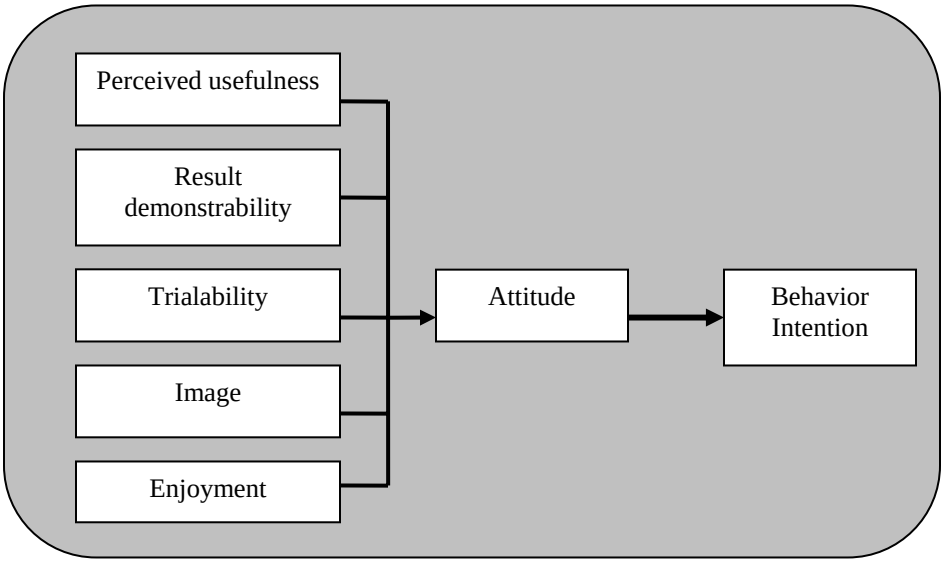


**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**

**Hypotheses were developed based on the theoretical framework.**

**$H_1$ : Perceived usefulness of e-MBA will influence the intention of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.**

**$H_2$ : Trialability of e-MBA will influence the intention of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.**

**$H_3$ : Result demonstrability of e-MBA will influence the intention of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.**

**$H_4$ : Image of e-MBA will influence the intention of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.**

**$H_5$ : Enjoyment of e-MBA will influence the intention of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.**

**$H_6$ : The attitude of a potential user regarding e-learning will influence behavior intention towards technology adoption for e-MBA.**

## RESULTS

**The profile of respondents is depicted in Table 1. Respondents were majority female (72.8%) compared to male (27.2%). By ethnic, Malay and Chinese are giving similar rate at 45.6%, Indian at 6.5%, and others at 2.4%.**

**Table: 1**
**Respondents Profile**

| Item | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 46 | 27.2 |
| Female | 123 | 72.8 |
| **Ethnic** | | |
| Malay | 77 | 45.6 |
| Chinese | 77 | 45.6 |
| Indian | 11 | 6.5 |
| Others | 4 | 2.4 |
| **Age (years)** | | |
| Less than 20 | 35 | 20.7 |
| 21 to 30 | 100 | 59.2 |
| 31 to 40 | 27 | 16.0 |
| 41 to 50 | 7 | 4.1 |
| **Education level** | | |
| High school or lower | 69 | 40.8 |
| Diploma | 17 | 10.1 |
| First degree | 82 | 48.5 |
| Master degree | 1 | 0.6 |

**By age, respondents were grouped into less than 20 (20.7%), 21 to 30 (59.2%), 31 to 40 (16%), and 41 to 50 (4.1%). By academic background, respondents that hold first degree comprised of 48.5%, diploma degree at 10.1%, and master degree at .6%. Meanwhile for qualification from high school or lower are represented by 40.8%.**

**The reliability analysis was conducted in order to ensure the internal validity and consistency of the items used for each variables. Hair et al. (1998) suggested that Cronbach Alpha values from .6 to .7 were deemed the lower limit of acceptability. An alpha of more than .7 would indicate that the items are homogeneous and measuring the same constant. Table 2 depicted the reliability analysis of the study.**

**Table: 2**
**Reliability Analysis**

| Item | Cronbach Alpha |
|---|---|
| Perceived usefulness | .86 |
| Trialability | .80 |
| Result demonstrability | .83 |
| Image | .71 |
| Enjoyment | .70 |
| Attitude | .89 |
| Behavior intention | .84 |

**Based on descriptive analysis, mean and standard deviation were calculated as stated in Table 3. Respondents have a positive opinion towards e-MBA adoption when the mean values for the independent variables; perceived usefulness, trialability, result demonstrability, image, and enjoyment, show more than average, at 3 and above. Looking at mediator, the respondents do have positive attitude and perceived behavior control towards e-MBA adoption with a mean of 3.25. For dependent variable, behavior intention, the mean is 3.17. Further, the standard deviation for all variables showed less than 1, indicated that there was less variation among respondents' opinion to each variable.**

**Table: 3**
**Descriptive Analysis**

| Item | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| Perceived usefulness | 3.45 | .74 |
| Trialability | 3.41 | .72 |
| Result demonstrability | 3.48 | .83 |
| Image | 3.19 | .77 |
| Enjoyment | 3.45 | .71 |
| Attitude | 3.25 | .75 |
| Behavior intention | 3.17 | .73 |

**Further Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine all the bivariate relationships among the variables as in Table 4. Statistical evidence show that significant correlations exist between intention behaviors towards e-MBA adoption with all other variables. For independent variable, intention behavior has a highest positive correlation with image variable at .54. For mediator, attitude has a high positive correlation that will affect the relationship between independent variables at .63. This can be concluded that when respondents enrolled with e-MBA program, it will show their image status.**

**Table: 4**
**Correlation Coefficient Analysis**

| Variable | Attitude | Behavior intention |
|---|---|---|
| Perceived usefulness | .67** | .52** |
| Trialability | .67** | .51** |
| Result demonstrability | .42** | .28** |
| Image | .62** | .54** |
| Enjoyment | .57** | .36** |
| Attitude | .63** | 1.00 |

** p<.01

**Regression analysis was conducted between variables. Table 5 shows a significant relationship between the independent variable and the attitude towards e-MBA adoption. The F value of 64.7 is significant at p<.05, indicating that there exists at lease one significant predictor. $R^2$ value of .67 indicates that the model can explain that about 67% of the variance in attitude can be explained by the independent variables.**

**Table: 5**
**Regression Results Between Attitudinal Belief and Attitude**

| Variables | Beta | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived usefulness | .27 | .03 | .97 |
| Trialability | .29 | 4.12 | .00* |
| Result demonstrability | -.11 | 3.67 | .00* |
| Image | .27 | -1.90 | .06 |
| Enjoyment | .22 | 3.68 | .00* |
| F value | 64.70 | | |
| Sig. F | .00 | | |
| $R^2$ | .67 | | |
| Durbin-Watson | 1.97 | | |

*** Significance p<.05**

**Further, Table 6 indicates that the relationship between respondents' opinion on perceived usefulness, trialability, result demonstrability, image, and enjoyment; and attitude, and behavior intention towards e-MBA adoption. There is a significant relationship between the independent variables and behavior intention towards e-MBA adoption. The F value of 23.46 is significant at .05, indicating that there exists at least one significant predictor. $R^2$ value of .47 indicates that the model can explain that about 47% of the variance in attitude can be explained by the independent variable.**

**Table: 6**
**Regression Results Between Attitudinal Belief, Attitude, and Behavior Intention**

| Variables | Beta | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived usefulness | .04 | .49 | .63 |
| Trialability | .20 | 2.11 | .04* |
| Result demonstrability | -.07 | -.93 | .36 |
| Image | .27 | 3.12 | .00* |
| Enjoyment | -.03 | -.44 | .66 |
| Attitude | .32 | 3.70 | .00* |
| F value | 23.46 | | |
| Sig. F | .00 | | |
| $R^2$ | .47 | | |
| Durbin-Watson | 2.14 | | |

*** Significance at p<.05**

**After evaluating the results, it can be concluded that trialability and image were significant predictors to influence the behavior intention of the potential user towards e-MBA adoption. Further, the result also indicated that attitude of potential user regarding e-learning will influence behavior intention towards e-MBA adoption. Finally, overall findings are summarized as below:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **$H_1$:** | **Perceived usefulness of e-MBA will influence the attitude of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.** | **-- Accept** |
| **$H_2$:** | **Trialability of e-MBA will influence the attitude of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.** | **-- Accept** |
| **$H_3$:** | **Result demonstrability of e-MBA will influence the attitude of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.** | **-- Accept** |
| **$H_4$:** | **Image of e-MBA will influence the attitude of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.** | **-- Accept** |
| **$H_5$:** | **Enjoyment of e-MBA will influence the attitude of the potential user towards technology adoption for e-MBA.** | **-- Accept** |
| **$H_6$:** | **The attitude of a potential user regarding e-learning will influence behavior intention towards technology adoption for e-MBA.** | **-- Accept** |

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

**The objective of this study is to determine the success factors that contributing to the potential user acceptance towards new technology adoption, focusing on education trend, particularly in e-MBA. The study has shown that potential user of e-MBA program place the opportunity for trial usage and image of the program. It is hoped that the outcomes some valuable information to higher learning institutions either public or private to embark on programs that would be effective in encouraging potential e-MBA students, especially younger generations to adopt with e-learning in order to face globally competitiveness.**

**In examining the influence of independent variables (attitudinal belief - perceived usefulness, trialability, result demonstrability, image, and enjoyment) on mediator variable (attitude) towards e-MBA adoption, it was found that all five of the attitudinal belief dimensions were positively related to attitude towards e-MBA adoption. The findings are consistent with the past research conducted by Choi et al. (2002). They discovered that perceive usefulness, trialability, result demonstrability, image and enjoyment were significant influencing attitude towards information appliances adoption. The findings of this study suggest that attitude of potential user towards e-MBA program was positively influenced by perceived usefulness towards the program, an opportunity for trial usage given by the provider, retrieval of results of the progress explicitly, assisting them to have a good image and feeling an enjoyment with the program. As one of the factors affecting attitude, image was found to be the most important factor influences attitude towards e-MBA adoption. This means that regarding the new technology adoption acceptance, the ability to show the good image or social position is very significant factor to be considered.**

**The mediator variable chosen will give the mediating effect, partial effect or no effect at all to the particular independent variables and dependent variable as shown in the theoretical framework. This means that moderator variable (attitude) will give an impact to the relationship between independent variable (attitudinal belief) and dependent variable (behavior intention towards e-MBA adoption). For trialability, it was significant to the intention towards e-MBA adoption. This finding is not consistent with the previous research conducted by Tornatzky and Klein (1982). Result demonstrability also was significant and supported. This finding is supported by the pas studies (Karahanna et al., 1999; Venkatesh & Brown, 2001). Perceived usefulness, image, and enjoyment were not significant. For perceived usefulness, this finding is contrary with past study conducted by Ndubisi, Jantan, and Richardson (2001). For image, this finding is contrary with Tornatzky and Klein (1982). While for enjoyment, this finding is also contrary with the research conducted by Teo et al.**

**(1999). Mediator variable (attitude) is significant and supported. This means that attitude did carry an impact to potential user to the behavior intention towards e-MBA adoption. For attitude, the finding is supported by Jason (2002).**

**This study showed that all five of the attitudinal belief factors were significant with the attitude towards behavior intention on new technology, e-MBA adoption. This means that e-MBA program instructor or provider should focus to these factors that affect their attitudinal belief and will influence the potential user attitude to enroll with e-MBA program. The factors are the feeling of perceived usefulness to themselves when enroll with the program, they have an opportunity for trial usage, they are able to retrieve the result explicitly and the program will assist them to have a good image and feeling of enjoyment. This is because these factors from the positive predictive effect on the potential user's attitude towards behavior intention e-MBA adoption.**

**Further, this study also indicates that the Internet can be a powerful tool in education. This tool has the potential both to support effective education programs and to expose student to the implications of information systems. It is evident that the instructor or providers needs to upgrade their technical skills and knowledge in order to keep in touch with the technological developments that are undoubtedly taking place (Lord, 2000). The skillfully of human resources are very important in order to provide the competitive e-MBA program instead of the technology development and improvement to convince the potential user. This is due to show the ability and efficiency of the technology in providing future education methodology to them in increase their confident level.**

**Future research should extend the size to entire nation in order to obtain a better representative of the population. Other variables that influence the intention of e-MBA adoption by users need to be considered such as normative beliefs and control beliefs. Although there are some limitations, it is hoped that the findings of this study will appear significant enough for further justification.**

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