Users’ Satisfaction and Behavioural Reaction: The Impact of Synchronous Online Training

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Abstract

Currently, training has always been an issue for an organization, whether it is relevant to conduct training for their employees by considering the issues of cost, place, time, facilities and many other factors, however in an organization knowledgeable employees are the most important assets to measures the organizations success. As technology grows drastically especially the development of internet and World Wide Web, there has been a significant change of computing environment over the past decade. Drawing upon “Technology Acceptance Model and Theory of Reason Action” this paper hypothesized the impact of synchronous online training towards the relationship between the trainer and trainee. Based on past studies, the synchronous online training defined as the use of computers and computer network to unite instructors and learners in real time via two-way communication where the students or trainees may benefit from the dialogue or training session. With the presence of synchronous online training that creates real time communication has been a great avenue for organizations to identify best training platform for their employees to boost their employees’ job performance. Furthermore, the researcher also intended to examine the relationship among the effectiveness of online delivery and the computer anxiety toward users’ satisfaction and users’ behavioral reaction among Malaysian manufacturing company’s employees who have participated in online based training as Malaysia manufacturing companies are the pioneer who adopted online training due to location remoteness and cost efficiencies. A total of 500 questionnaires was distributed to identify the relationship between two components of user reactions and user satisfaction which demonstrate the impact of synchronous online training in an organization. The final results of this study will reveal the importance of users’ satisfaction and reaction toward synchronous online training and identified which component can best evaluate employees’ job performance in an organization. Therefore, it is appropriate to review
the measures of user satisfaction and reaction toward the synchronous online training. Hence, the study is helpful on the growth of online training and the dimensions of user satisfaction and user reaction and domains of its relationship.
Kepuasan Pengguna dan Tindak Balas Pengguna: Kesan Latihan Serentak Secara Talian

Abstrak

Pada masa kini, kebanyakan syarikat menghadapi masalah untuk menyediakan latihan yang sesuai kepada pekerja akibat daripada kos latihan yang mahal, tempat latihan, masa dan kemudahan yang lain; akan tetapi kejayaan sesebuah syarikat adalah tertakluk kepada pekerja-pekerja yang berilmu kerana meraka adalah aset yang paling penting kepada syarikat. Dengan perkembangan teknologi yang pesat, internet dan “World Wide Web” telah memberi banyak kesan yang memberangsangkan kepada persekitaran pengkomputeran. Berdasarkan pendekatan “Model Penerimaan Teknologi dan Teori Tindakan Sebab”, tesis ini disediakan dengan menghipotesisikan impak latihan serentak secara talian terhadap hubungan diantara pelatih dan pengguna. Menurut kajian lepas, maksud latihan serentak secara talian adalah situasi di mana pelatih dan pengguna rangkaian komputer berkomunikasi dua hala dan membantu pengguna bermanfaat daripada sesi dialog atau latihan. Dengan kehadiran latihan serentak secara talian, organisasi dapat menggunakan rangkaian ini sebagai platform terbaik untuk menyediakan latihan kepada pekerja mereka dan meningkatkan prestasi kerja mereka. Tujuan penyelidik ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara keberkesanan penyampaian dalam talian dan kebimbangan pengguna terhadap komputer yang menghasilkan kepuasan pengguna dan tindak balas pengguna terhadap latihan serentak secara talian dikalangkan pekerja-pekerja syarikat pengeluaran Malaysia yang telah menghadiri program latihan berasaskan talian, ini kerana syarikat pengeluaran adalah syarikat perintis yang mengamalkan latihan dalam talian akibat daripada perbezaan lokasi dan kecekapan kos. Sebanyak 500 soal selidik telah diedarkan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan antara dua
komponen tindak balas pengguna dan kepuasan pengguna yang memberikan kesan kepada latihan serentak secara talian. Keputusan akhir kajian ini akan mendedahkan kepentingan pengguna kepuasan dan tindak balas terhadap latihan serentak secara talian dan mengenal pasti komponen yang terbaik untuk menilai prestasi pekerja. Oleh itu, adalah wajar untuk mengkaji kepuasan pengguna dan reaksi mereka terhadap latihan serentak secara talian dalam perkembangan latihan dalam talian dengan dimensi kepuasan pengguna, tindak balas pengguna dan domain-domain lain yang sehubungan dengan-nya.
# Table of Contents

List of Tables vii
List of Figures viii

## Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of Study 1
    1.1.1 The Malaysian Scenario 3
1.2 Problem Statement 5
1.3 Research Objectives 7
    1.3.1 General Objectives 7
    1.3.2 Specific Objectives 8
1.4 Research Questions 9
1.5 Definition of Key Terms 10
1.6 Significance of the Study 11
1.7 Scope of the Study 12
1.8 Organizations of Chapter 12

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction 14
2.2 Development of Online Training 15
    2.2.1 Technology Acceptance Model 21
    2.2.2 Theory of Transactional Distance 23
    2.2.3 End-User Computing Satisfaction (EUCS) Instruments 23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.12.3 TPB - Theory of Planned Behavior</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13 Justification of Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14 Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15 Development of Research Hypotheses</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15.1 The Relationship between Effectiveness of Online Delivery and</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15.2 The Relationship between Computer Anxiety and Perceived</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15.3 The Relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15.4 The Relationship between Perceived Usefulness, Perceived</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use, User Satisfaction and Behavioral Reaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16 Conclusion</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter Three: Methodology**

3.1 Introduction                                                        | 57   |
3.2 Research Design                                                     | 57   |
3.2.1 Research Questionnaire                                            | 57   |
3.2.2 Sample, Research Site and Procedure                               | 58   |
3.2.3 Data Collection Procedures                                        | 59   |
3.2.4 Questionnaire Design                                              | 60   |
3.3 Measures                                                            | 61   |
3.3.1 Effectiveness of Online Delivery                                  | 62   |
3.3.2 Computer Anxiety                                                  | 62   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 Users’ Satisfaction and Users’ Behavioral Reaction</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.5 Demographic Variables</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Pilot Study</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Data Analysis</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1 Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2 Factor Analysis</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3 Reliability Test</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4 Factor Independence Analysis</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.5 Tests of the Underlying Assumptions of Multivariate Analysis</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.6 Standard Regressions Analysis</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Conclusion</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter Four: Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Survey Response</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Demographic Profile</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Goodness of Measures</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 Factor Analysis</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1.1 Factor Analysis of Effectiveness of Online Delivery</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1.2 Factor Analysis of Computer Anxiety</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1.3 Factor Analysis of Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1.4 Factor Analysis of Perceived Ease of Use</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.1.5Factor Analysis of Users’ Satisfaction 82
4.4.1.6Factor Analysis of Users’ Behavioral Reaction 83
4.4.2Reliability Analysis 84
4.4.3Reinstatement of Hypotheses 84
4.4.4Measures of Central Tendencies, Dispersion and Analysis of Intercorrelation among Study Variables 86
4.4.5Standard Regression Testing 88
4.4.6Results of Standard Regressions Analysis 88
4.4.6.1Effectiveness of Online Delivery and Perceived Usefulness 90
4.4.6.2Effectiveness of Online Delivery and Perceived Ease of Use 91
4.4.6.3Computer Anxiety and Perceived Usefulness 91
4.4.6.4Computer Anxiety and Perceived Ease of Use 92
4.4.6.5Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use 93
4.4.6.6Perceived Usefulness and Users’ Satisfaction 93
4.4.6.7Perceived Usefulness and Users’ Behavioral Reaction 94
4.4.6.8Perceived Ease of Use and Users’ Satisfaction 94
4.4.6.9Perceived Ease of Use and Users’ Behavioral Reaction 94
4.5Hypothesis Testing 95
4.6Conclusion 100

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1Introduction 101
5.2The Background 101
5.3Effectiveness of Online Delivery, Perceived Usefulness and Perceived
Ease of Use

5.3.1 Technology Characteristics, Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

5.3.2 Instructor Characteristics and Users’ Characteristics Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

5.4 Computer Anxiety, Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use of Online Training

5.5 Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

5.6 Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use, Users’ Satisfaction and Behavioral Reaction

5.7 Implications of the Study

5.7.1 Theoretical Implications

5.7.2 Practical Implications

5.8 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

5.9 Conclusion

References

Appendices
List of Tables

Table 3.1: Summary of Dimensions 61
Table 3.2: Re-word of Questionnaire Items 65
Table 4.1: Demographic Profile 74
Table 4.2: Results of Factor Analysis of Effectiveness of Online Delivery Items 77
Table 4.3: Results of Factor Analysis of Computer Anxiety Items 79
Table 4.4: Results of Factor Analysis of Perceived Usefulness 80
Table 4.5: Results of Factor Analysis of Perceived Ease of Use 81
Table 4.6: Results of Factor Analysis of Users’ Satisfaction 82
Table 4.7: Results of Factor Analysis of Users’ Behavioral Reaction 83
Table 4.8: Restated Hypotheses Based on Factor Analysis Results 85
Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Cronbach’s Coefficients Alpha among Study Variables 87
Table 4.10: Standard Regressions Analysis – Effectiveness of Online Delivery and Computer Anxiety Interaction on Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use Interaction on Users’ Satisfaction and Behavioral Reaction 89
Table 4.11: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results 99
List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Technology Acceptance Model 21

Figure 2.2: End-User Computing Satisfaction (EUCS) Instruments 24

Figure 2.3: Model of Effectiveness of Online Delivery and Computer Anxiety
  Lead to User Satisfaction and Behavioral Reaction. Perceived Ease
  of Use and Perceived Usefulness of Online Training as Independent
  and Dependent Variables 49

Figure 2.4: Developments of Research Hypotheses 51
Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Technology has tremendously impacted our daily life and it has given us great opportunities to explore the world without any hesitation. With the establishment of online training various organizations are utilizing the platform to support their training such as online training for health care program (Robroek, Polinder, Bredt, & Burdorf, 2012) and public health workforce in the US are collaborating with University of North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness to create internet based-distance learning programs (Wallace, Horney, Wilfert, & Alexander, 2013). Currently, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have prominent platform with recent way to provide training to attract students and users to reformulate their online training or education system (Castaño, Maiz, & Garay, 2015; Poy & Aguilar, 2015).

One of the oldest and best known terminologies for online training is distance learning (Lii, 2013; Volery & Lord, 2000) where distance learning was originally invented to provide education that was conducted through the Web (Azizah, Fariza & Hazita, 2005). This was especially for students who faced geographically remoteness from a university campus, where flexibility of time and place made online learning or education became widespread educational phenomena throughout the world (Berge, 1997; Shen, Laffey, Lin & Huang, 2006). Distance learning is defined as obtaining information and skills through computer and internet mediated information and instruction (Granitz & Greene, 2003).

Online training is also known as e-learning or blended learning where students or corporate employees log on to a particular site at school, library, or between staff meetings.
Nevertheless, synchronous distance learning has become pertinent method of training in corporations and academic (Taran, 2006).

Russell (2002) indicates that the revolution of digital world and technology has given higher education an opportunity to transform into technology based education which is able to impact the online based education and online training as well. He noted that between the year 1995 and 1998 the percentage of distance education courses that were offered by higher education institutions increased from 33% to 44%. This percentage shows that education through online technology started to develop since the year 1995.

Information technology systems used to deliver distance learning has given an opportunity for online learning users’ and understand their acceptance toward online learning (Shen et al., 2006). Online learning has also become a popular option among post-secondary students (Jaggars & Bailey, 2010).

Over the years, terminology of distance learning has changed and it is now better known as online learning which examine student behaviors, student interactions, technology, and learning environment (Sunal, Sunal, Odell, & Sundberg, 2003), it has become an interesting education service which is able to serve the learners in a flexible method (Funda & Aynur, 2009). However, online learning or training is not solely based on delivery method and presentation skills but it also involves users’ reaction and interaction between instructors and other users (Funda & Aynur, 2009). Recently, U.S. Department of Education has concluded that student learning outcomes in either fully online course were equal to or better than those in traditional face-to-face courses (Jaggars & Bailey, 2010).

Today’s organizations uses various methods to train their employees and one of the way is through technology based environment involving computers and internet (Funda & Aynur, 2009). Hence, organizations will not exclude online training in their budget and corporate
strategic plans. Furthermore, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has slowly replacing the traditional learning environment (Castaño, Maiz, & Garay, 2015; Moe, 2015; Poy & Aguilar, 2015).

However, in this competitive global market, organizations’ need to ensure that their organizations are financially stable and has high performing employees are critical. Many times, companies’ faces difficulties when they release new products and services where employees are require training within ambitious timelines and required training in “just as needed” basis (Moon, Birchall, Williams, & Vrasidas, 2005). Therefore, online training serves an important role by delivering training “just-in-time” at any place (Simmons, 2002). Even though, online training is still at the introductory stage in Malaysia, the potential for growth is highly expected and online training has a high potential to decrease training-related distributions cost (Long, DuBois, & Faley, 2008).

Given the above background of the online training, this study was undertaken to examine the employees’ reaction toward online training in the Malaysian context where perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness has been adopted from technology acceptance model proposed by Davis (1986) to determine users’ satisfaction and behavioral intention toward online training. There are numerous relevant studies that has been conducted on the use of the web-based learning environment in Malaysia (Wai, Lock, & Gun, 2004).

1.1.1 The Malaysian Scenario

Information Technology (IT) has become a major component of the country’s development plans. Since Malaysia’s independence in 1957 the Malaysian government has implemented numerous types of development projects to boost the country’s growth (Hassan & Omar, 2010). The Malaysian government has introduced various efforts to facilitate greater
adaptation of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in different fields such as business, industry, education and life in general. In Malaysia, the development of e-learning started during the pre e-learning era where Educational Technology Division was set up by the Ministry of Education in 1972 (Asirvatham, Kaur, & Abas, 2005; Goi & Ng, 2009). Furthermore, in 1991, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad have stressed the importance of ICT education, as the country was moving toward developed country with the citizens’ well equipped with technology information (Nadzrah, 2007).

In addition to the development projects, there are number of institutions that have been established, such as the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems (MIMOS), which was established in 1985 to support ICT. Besides, under the ninth Malaysian plan, the Malaysian government has allocated RM 12.88 billion for ICT-related programs. At the same time, the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) was introduced as a centerpiece of information technology development. MSC was designed to create an ideal environment for ICT-related production and information superhighway (Hassan & Omar, 2010). The MSC’s superhighway is proposed to provide Malaysians with fast and reliable access to global information and indeed such facilities has given online based-training an opportunity to grow rapidly in the future. It was also stated in Vision 2020 that, information technology (IT) will be a long term development towards Malaysia’s national goals to achieve a developed-nation status while moving towards the formation of civil society (Baninajarian, Abdullah, & Bolong, 2011). Furthermore, distance learning has become a pertinent tool to cater to prospective Malaysian learners.

Even though online education has provided an avenue for distance learning, it is not solely for distance education and higher education. Instead, it is also for organizations to conduct training through internet. Today’s organizations have realized the position of training as a key element for their organizations. However, there are many employees in Malaysian
organizations who are lack of training. This is because many organizations found that conducting training causes incurs high expenses for an organization but Noe (2000) clarified that conducting training program is seen as an organizational investment and rather than an expense.

In Malaysia, the implementation of online training as a training avenue for employees is still at the introductory stage. There are many organizations which prefer conventional training programs and such training involves high cost in terms of a venue to conduct and trainers. Desseler (1997) added that training is futile if the training program is unable to change the trainees’ attitude at the workplace. Azizah, Fariza, and Hazita (2005) argue that in the future, the implementation of e-learning is dependent on the understanding of the dynamics of teaching and learning and not from more improved or functional technology which means that online learning will focus more on the learners and instructors. However technology still plays most important roles in online learning.

As mentioned earlier, online training has high potential to grow in Malaysia, as the government also strongly supports the development of information technology by creating ICT and information superhighway through MSC to provide strong background support for online based training to further develop in Malaysia.

1.2 Problem Statement

In this present day, organizations assume that training is a significant component to the organization, but many organizations still struggle with this issue such as difficulties in choosing the most effective and prominent avenue to conduct trainings for their employees. While struggling to train employees quickly, organizations are also facing limited budgets to develop and deliver frequent training to their employees (Taran, 2006). The majority of
organizations found that investing on training programs for their employee is a waste of money if employees failed to applied and practice what they have actually learned during the training session (Broad & Newstrom, 1992) and it has been a hindrance to organizations in conduct trainings in the future.

There are numerous researches that have been conducted on other components of training such as distance training (Schreiber & Berge, 1998), online learning (Dennis, Cynthia, Michael, & Cheryl, 2003), distance education, web-based learning (Wai, Lock, & David Gun, 2004), transfer of training and smart schools (Ya’acob, Nor, & Azman, 2005). Fewer studies have been done on synchronous online training that study the effectiveness of online delivery and computer anxiety which lead to users’ satisfaction and behavioral intention in Malaysia. However, conducting teaching and learning through technology should be used with cautious action (Ya’acob, Nor, & Azman, 2005). Despite the fact that, developed nations like the United States have been doing internet-based business for a long time while in Malaysia most people are still conservative toward online based transaction due to serious concerns about security, trust and the reliability of online transactions. Ambiguity in using the technology effectively are becoming biggest issues faced by organizations as they look forward to conducting distance learning and they also wrestle with how to institutionalize their efforts so that distance learning can be part of the organization’s profile (Schreiber & Berge, 1998).

The influence of distance learning outcomes and computer anxiety play a major role in conducting synchronous online training which leads to employee satisfaction and behavioral intention toward synchronous online training. However, the question is how far are the employees who attended synchronous online training satisfied with what they have learned and intend to attend synchronous online training again? Another issue that arises is how well does the synchronous online based training serve the employees in term of the technology, instructors
and employees themselves? Do employees face time constraints to attend online based training? Do the employees who attended the synchronous online training have any difficulties in using computer? Is synchronous online training easy to use and does it enhance employees’ performance? Apart from technologies and employees issues, the most crucial questions arises, how financially capable are organizations to conduct training or online based training?

Until today, no known research in the past has been found to have conducted researches on effectiveness of online delivery and computer anxiety in relations with employees’ satisfaction and behavioral intention. Therefore, this research aims to study the relationships among the effectiveness of online delivery and computer anxiety which lead employees’ satisfaction and behavioral intention toward synchronous online training by manufacturing companies in Malaysia.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objectives

This study attempts to find out an empirical relationship between four major variables namely effectiveness of online delivery, computer anxiety, employee satisfaction and behavioral reaction. Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are also included in this study to be dependent and independent variable. It is believed that the empirical relationship between effectiveness of online delivery are able to increase employees’ satisfaction and behavioral reaction toward synchronous online training and enrich employees’ job performance. Furthermore, employees’ computer anxiety also determined their satisfaction and behavioral reaction toward online training. Therefore, companies are able to decide the best training platform for their staff by cost saving.
1.3.2 Specific Objectives

There are seven specific objectives of the study as below:

I. To investigate whether the effectiveness of online delivery such as technology, instructors’ characteristics and user’s characteristics will affect the employees’ perceived usefulness of synchronous online training.

II. To examine whether the effectiveness of online delivery such as technology, instructors’ characteristics and users’ characteristics will affect the employees’ perceived ease of use of synchronous online training.

III. To find out whether the computer anxiety (trait anxiety, state anxiety and concept-specific anxiety) will impact perceived usefulness of synchronous online training.

IV. To investigate whether the computer anxiety (trait anxiety, state anxiety and concept-specific anxiety) will affect the employees’ perceived ease of use of synchronous online training.

V. To observe whether perceived ease of use of online training affect perceived usefulness of synchronous online training.

VI. To examine the impact of employees’ perceived usefulness of synchronous online training toward their satisfaction and behavioral reaction.

VII. To investigate the impact of employees’ perceived ease of use of synchronous online training toward their satisfaction and behavioral reaction.
1.4 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following question: How does synchronous online training impact users’ satisfaction and behavioral reaction in Malaysian context as past studies found that users’ persistence are able to result in users’ success or completion of their online training (Hart, 2012).

Therefore, the following questions are addressed:

I. Does the effectiveness of online delivery such as technology, instructors’ characteristics and user’s characteristics affect the employees’ perceived usefulness of synchronous online training?

II. Does the effectiveness of online delivery such as technology, instructors’ characteristics and users’ characteristics affect the employees’ perceived ease of use of synchronous online training?

III. Does the computer anxiety (trait anxiety, state anxiety and concept-specific anxiety) impact perceived usefulness of synchronous online training?

IV. Does the computer anxiety (trait anxiety, state anxiety and concept-specific anxiety) impact the employees’ perceived ease of use of synchronous online training?

V. Does perceived ease of use of online training affect perceived usefulness of synchronous online training?

VI. Does the impact of employees’ perceived usefulness of synchronous online training affect their satisfaction and behavioral reaction?

VII. Does the impact of employees’ perceived ease of use of synchronous online training affect their satisfaction and behavioral reaction?