An Integrated Model to Assess EFL Learners' Online Learning Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Bilibili is a widely popular video-sharing application in China. This study aims to develop a comprehensive model to investigate the behavior of Chinese English learners on Bilibili, based on the theory of planned behavior, technology acceptance model, past experience, and past behavior. Fifteen hypotheses were proposed and tested using smart partial least squares (smart PLS) with data collected from 223 participants. The findings revealed that learners' past experience and behavior influenced their subjective norms and perceived behavioral control of learning English in Bilibili. Perceived ease of use was found to be influenced by perceived usefulness. Subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and perceived usefulness were identified as significant factors influencing learners' intention. However, attitude did not significantly influence intention. Furthermore, behavioral intention significantly impacted learners' actual behavior but perceived behavioral control did not. Future research could focus on refining the combination model in the online learning domain.

KEYWORDS

English as Foreign Language, Past Behaviour, Past Experience, Smart PLS, Technology Acceptance (TAM), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology significantly contributed to the change of both the way of entertainment and learning approaches. Some online platforms, like Tiktok, Youtube, and Bilibili, became the main gathering places for the young generations (Chen, 2020). Mostly, people regarded them as a place only for entertainment. However, these platforms contained much more abundant resources for different purposes. Bilibili was a popular video-sharing social media in China. According to its home page, it contained various channels, including Fanju (serialized animated television series), documentaries, music, knowledge, and so on (www.bilibili.com). The channel of knowledge was further divided into science, campus study, humanities & social science, and so on. Many excellent teachers and professors shared their courses or knowledge on this platform and gained appraisal from different people, including students, front-line teachers, and society. A group of retired professors even were listed as the top ten people touching China in 2022 (Touching China's 2022 Person of the Year Award Ceremony, 2023).

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Despite the excellent resources for English learning, students' learning behavior needed much more attention because of the coexistence of content for amusement and learning (www.bilibili.com). Students may want to search and learn by themselves. Sometimes, students would be recommended by their teachers or friends to listen to excellent English courses to learn and understand some English-related knowledge better (Yu et al., 2022). However, Bilibili was not designed specifically for learning (Chen, 2020). Therefore, the influential factors contributing to students' actual behavior in learning English in Bilibili deserved to be discussed. Thus researchers could find more valuable suggestions for learners' better learning in Bilibili.

However, seldom studies focused on the related question. Firstly, previous studies about Bilibili were rare after a comprehensive search of the relative studies about Bilibili on the Web of Science. On the other hand, previous studies on Bilibili were mainly about the influence, quality, or spread of many other types of videos, such as the quality of internet videos about health information (Bai et al., 2022), analysis of Hanfu videos (Cui, 2022), and impacts of users' automated translation of foreign videos about China (Ding et al., 2021). Some research focused on the unique things of the website itself, like the expression of taboo words in Bilibili (Chen, 2022) or community construction (Chen & Yang, 2023). The learning behaviours got little attention before compared with other types of behaviours in Bilibili.

The scarcity of relative studies did not negate the significance of research on English learning behavior. Bilibili, a prevalent application in China, served as a valuable platform for individuals learning English as a foreign language. It was necessary to have a close examination of learners' English learning behaviors on Bilibili, thus better facilitating learners' learning behaviors and processes. Therefore, this study endeavored to develop a robust model for predicting learners' behavior on Bilibili. To construct the model, the researchers integrated the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) while incorporating past experience and past behavior as antecedents of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

TPB

The theory of planned behavior was a development and extension of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The theory of planned behavior was a cognitive theory used to understand how an individual decided to act (Ajzen, 1985). According to the theory of planned behavior, intentions were the motivational factors influencing behavior, and stronger intentions predicted a more substantial possibility of performing the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (1991) pointed out three determinants of intention: attitude toward the behavior, the subjective norm, and the degree of perceived behavioral control. The subjective norm referred to the social press an individual was going to face when deciding to act, and the perceived behavioral control referred to the perceived ease of acting (Sussman & Gifford, 2019).

TAM

Davis (1989) proposed the technology acceptance model (TAM), also based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness were the two core components of TAM. The perceived ease of use referred to an individual's thought of the easiness of new technology, and the perceived usefulness referred to how helpful an individual thought of the studied technology (Davis, 1989). They were influenced by various external components and, in turn, influenced an individual's acceptance of some informational technology. Since the proposal of TAM, many developmental models of it were generated in the following years, including TAM 2, TAM3, UTAUT, and UTAUT 2.

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