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The Adoption of The Internet for B-to-B International Marketing: A Theoretical Model

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THE ADOPTION OF THE INTERNET FOR B-TO-B INTERNATIONAL MARKETING A THEORETICAL MODEL

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ABSTRACT

There has been considerable Research into the adoption of the Internet for Business-to-Business communication and commerce in recent years. The need to understand how and why industrial companies utilize the Internet is important for researchers and practitioners alike. This study combines Davis' model-the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)- and Roger's Theory- the Innovation diffusion Theory (IDT) to understand the process of Internet adoption for marketing purposes. It makes a comprehensive review of information technology, information systems, and marketing literature to locate factors that predict Internet use for marketing purposes. It extend both TAM and IDT to find out factors that affect relative advantage, ease of use and compatibility of using the Internet for B-to-B marketing activities.

KEYWORDS

Internet marketing; international Business-to-Business; innovation diffusion; technology acceptance

1. INTRODUCTION

A number of theoretical frameworks for the rational component of IT adoption have emerged in the last ten years. These frameworks provide managers with careful reasoned arguments and enable them to better influence the evaluation, adoption and use of Internet technology (Karahanna and Straub, 1999). Moreover, recent research into information technology (IT) adoption and use has been motivated by the desire to predict factors, which lead to successful application in a marketing context (Rose and Straub, 1998:39). So, the study of diffusion and adoption of new technologies has gained new interest after being popular during 1980s.

This new wave of interest is partly initiated by the increasing diffusion of networking technologies, such as the Internet, and the decreasing importance of geographical distances (Rose and Straub, 1998:39). IT was used in the 1960s to automate the back-office of companies but currently there is a shift of emphasis into the front office. This movement makes the division between front and back-offices less relevant as integrated systems increasingly remove the distinction between these two domains. Today, these systems employ ERP (Enterprise resource Planning) at the back end and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) on the front end of a company's supply chain (Borders, et al, 2001: 200).

However, Internet marketing as a technological innovation in B-to-B companies has not been studied rigorously from the perspective of diffusion, although there are srudies about IT adoptions in B-to-B companies (e.g. Cooper and Zmud, 1990; Drury and Farhoomand, 1996; Rose and Straub, 1998). Consequently, this study examines two theories that have been widely used over the past decade to assist in understanding of the IS/IT adoption and implementation processes and links them to the marketing value chain. Firstly, the diffusion of innovation theory (IDT) and secondly, technology acceptance model (TAM). These models offer different, though overlapping perspectives on how companies use new technologies. TAM focuses on *attitudes* toward using a particular IT based on perceived benefits (usefulness) and ease of use. IDT focuses on the relationship between *"perceived attributes"* of technology and *"rate of adoption of technology"*.

2. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

System usage is one of the basic dependent variables of information systems (DeLone and McLean, 1992:60). Researchers and practitioners often use the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to gain a better understanding of the adoption and use of information systems (Lederer, et al, 2000). It is one of the most influential research models in studies of the determinants of information systems acceptance.

Davis introduced an adoption of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), an especially well-researched intention model that has proven successful in predicting and explaining behaviour across a wide variety of domains (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), but the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was originally developed to understand the causal link between external variable and user acceptance of PC-based applications (Fenech, 1998:629). TAM uses TRA as a theoretical basis for specifying the causal linkages between two key beliefs: Perceived usefulness (U), and perceived ease of use (PEU), and how these benefits relate to users' attitudes, intentions and actual computer adoption behaviour (Davis, et al, 1989: 983).

According to TAM the usage of IT i.e. Internet is determined by *beliefs a user holds* about its perceived use (PU) and it's perceived ease-of-use (PEU) (Karahanna and Straub, 1999: 238). PU is defined as the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system can improve his/her performance. On the other hand, PEU is degree to which a person believes that using a particular system will be effortless. Even though, PU and PEU were significantly correlated with usage, Davis (1989) found that PU mediates the effect of PEU on usage (Karahanna and Straub, 1999: 238). In other words if someone believes that a system will improve his/her performance, he/she is more likely to accept the technology, even if it is at first difficult to use. The model was shown to have good predictive validity for the use of several information technologies including E-Mail and WWW (Fenech, 1998; Gefen and Straub, 1997).

Many researchers argued that usefulness is probably the strongest argument in favour of companies' use of the Internet as the level of technology advances in the short-term future, that usefulness will increase. (Abramson and Hollingshead, 1998). However, There are many factors that affect the usefulness of using the Internet in B-to-B IIM (Poon and Swatman, 1998:40);

1) Industry Adoption.
Widespread adoption of the Internet in the business sector (business partners and competitors).

2) Value-Chain Adoption.
The effect of customer and supplier adoption of the Internet on the companies.

3) Market Scope.
Market scope of the company has an effect on how much perceived benefits can be obtained by having an Internet connection.

4) Product Characteristics.
Characteristics include the physical or information component, usability in electronic form, value added during the transaction process, and customer preference between different forms of the same product and the related transaction process.

5) Management Involvement.
Management eagerness has a strong influence on Internet marketing success. (Berezai, 2000:20) stated that usefulness of the Internet has broadened from being a source of information to becoming a business tool, affecting the nature of business relationship.

The purchase and ordering of business supplies can now take place across electronic networks, reducing both the time taken to complete transactions and the number of actors involved in the process. Business can use the Internet to manage both their supply chains and their distribution systems. For businesses looking to reduce costs and improve efficiency, the Internet provides a medium that is both global and readily accessible.

However, There are many factors that can impede ease of use in Business-to-Business international Internet marketing (B-to-B IIM). Hoffman, et al (1995:8) state that convenience of access is at the core of the adoption of any technological application and determines its ultimate success. In the context of the Internet, ease of access is a multidimensional construct and includes high-speed access (the "bandwidth" problem), ease of finding a service provider, and the diffusion of the computer hardware/software/modem bundle. The secondary barriers to ease of use are, price, and risk, as well as such factors as privacy and security. Ease of use includes issues such as the user friendliness (or not) of the software, ease of software installation, and the like. Hence, attempts to develop technology that is user friendly are as important as the development of the technology itself. As is true with most IT adoption and use models, TAM has not been studied outside the industrialised world. However, within the industrialised world, it has proven to be widely applicable.

In fact, while TAM has been very successful in predicting the potential acceptance of an information system by its users (Lederer, et al, 2000:269), it provides little assistance in the design and development of systems with high level of user acceptance. So, to explore the determinants of the two major constructs in TAM, Venkatesh and Davis (1996) conducted three experiments to study the antecedents of perceived ease of use. They found that this was determined by the users' IT skills and the usability of the system, something that can only be determined through experience. Not surprisingly, findings suggest that training might be more effective than improved usability of the system if user acceptance is to be increased.

Many authors have extended the TAM by using other constructs in an attempt to improve its ability to predict use. For example Chau, (1996) has extended TAM to include both long-term and short-term perceived usefulness. The results reflect that perceived short-term usefulness has the most significant influence on the behavioural intention to use the technology. Igbaria, et al (1995) have extended it to include individual, organisational and system characteristics. Their results confirm that individual, organisational, and system characteristics have a strong influence on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Gefen and Straub (1997) have extended this to include gender. They found that researchers should include gender and IT diffusion models along with other cultural effects.

But findings about the effects of attitude and intention have not always been significant and there is a danger in focusing too much on technology and attitudes without taking application into consideration. Consequently, this research is limited to the direct effect of Internet application for marketing in a business-to-business context. Furthermore, despite the wide acceptance of TAM, it still needs to be utilized and interpreted with great caution.

2.2 Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT)
Recently, researchers in IS and IT have begun to rely on the theories of innovation diffusion to study implementation problems. A major focus of these studies has been how potential users'

perceptions of information technology innovation influence its adoption. Innovation diffusion theory is often associated with research into technology innovation. Rogers (1983; 1995) has defined eight types of diffusion research from "earliness of knowing about innovation", and "rate of adoption in different social systems", to "opinion leadership", and "diffusion networks", "communication channel use", and "consequences of innovation" are also considered. These issues may have particular significance from a marketing perspective.

Rogers (1995:5) defined diffusion as " the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system". He defines innovation as "an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as a new by individual or an other unit of adoption". Zaltman and Holbeck defined innovation as an idea, practice, or material artifact perceived to be new by the relevant unit of adoption (Drury and Farhoomand 1996:5). IDT aims to explain, among many things, the process of the innovation decision process, the determining factors of rate of adoption, and different categories of adopters. It also helps to predict the likelihood of adoption and rate of adoption of an innovation (Rogers, 1995).
The first contribution of IDT is the innovation decision process, which starts with one's knowledge about the innovation existence and ends with the confirmation of the adoption/rejection decision. Figure (2) explains the five stages that are involved in innovation decision process developed by Rogers (1995). At the knowledge stage, users are first exposed to the innovation and gain initial understanding of it. In the second and third stages, managers move from persuasion to the decision to adopt/reject the innovation. The fourth and final stages are implementation and use followed by the adoption/rejection decision to confirm or reserve the system from a usefulness or fitness perspective. In other words does it actually do what it is supposed to do?

The second contribution of IDT is the set of innovation attributes it provides that affect the rate of adoption. The attributes include relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, visibility, and observability (Rogers, 1983). The five attributes are reported to explain 49 to 87 percent of the variance rate of adoption (Rogers, 1995). Figure (3) explains the relationship between the five attributes and rate of adoption of innovation.

According to Rogers (1995), we can give the following brief definition of these attributes:

- **Relative Advantage:** The degree to which an innovation is perceived as being better than its antecedent;
- **Compatibility:** the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, needs, and past

FIGURE (2). INNOVATION DECISION PROCESS (SOURCE: ROGERS, 1995).

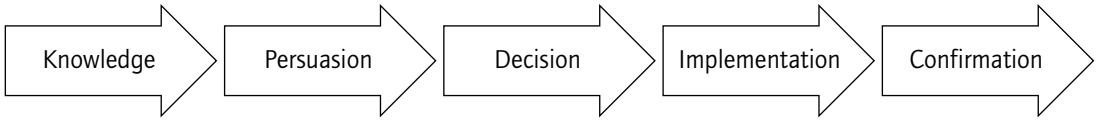
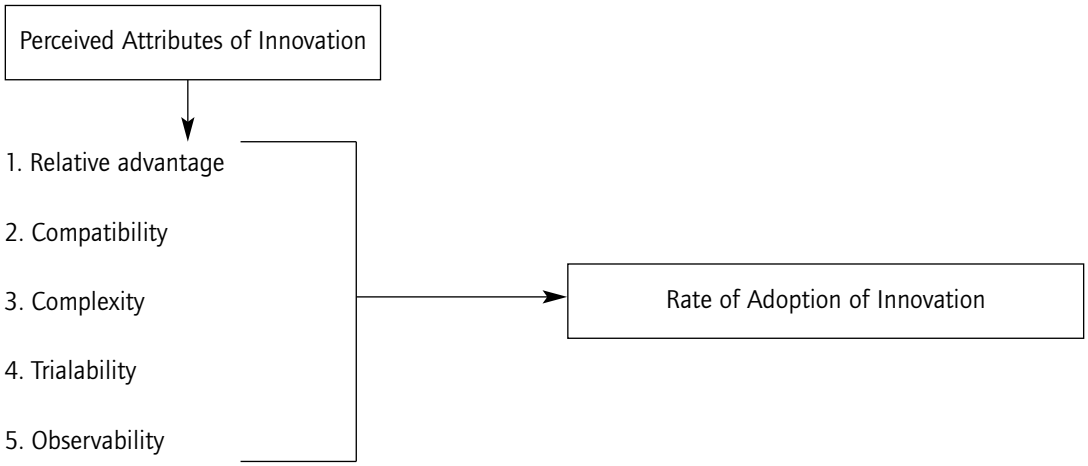


FIGURE (3): THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED ATTRIBUTES OF INNOVATION AND RATE OF ADOPTION OF INNOVATION (SOURCE: ROGERS, 1995:207)



experiences of potential adopters;
- **Complexity:** the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being difficult to use;
- **Observability:** the degree to which the results of an innovation are observable to others; and
- **Trialability:** the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with before adoption.

A stream of research on innovation diffusion has been based on these attributes. They appear to have different relative importance on the adoption of innovation. For example, Cooper and Zmud (1990) found that technological complexity is a significant factor inhibiting successful implementation and task-technology compatibility is a major factor in explaining the new technology adoption. Moore and Benbasat (1991) suggest seven measurement of innovation diffusion: relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability, complexity, image and voluntariness of use. Each measure was needed to assess users' perception of an IT innovation. They also developed measurement scales, which can be applied to any innovation and have been adapted in subsequent research papers (see: Moore, 1996; Karahanna and Straub, 1999).

While the literature on innovations and their adoption by organisations is extensive (Rogers, 1983), relatively few studies focus on high technology," new to the world" systems. Besides, The studies, which make use of diffusion of innovation theory, have tended to focus on the adoption of technology rather than attitudes or applications. Chan and Swatman (2000), propose other, more contextual, aspects of implementation, such as the social systems in which the innovation evolves, and the timing of the innovation, so that the implementation process for inter organisational systems can be understood.

3. COMBINING TAM AND IDT

A few recent studies have investigated factors affecting the use of the Internet and WWW (Cheung, et al, 2000; Fenech, 1998; Gefen and Straub, 1997; Lederer, et al, 2000; Lin and Lu, 2000; Moon and Kim, 2001). Chan and Swatman (2000:72) stated that there is very little literature which discusses the process of Internet-based marketing, so that researchers must start with the literature concerning more general IS/IS implementation and hope to develop a body of theory, which is more explicitly focused on the area of Internet Marketing.

TAM and IDT are among the most effective theories in predicting and explaining system use, user evaluation of systems and innovation diffusion, respectively. They are chosen as the bases for predicting the adoption of the Internet in B-to-B international Marketing because of their solid theoretical foundation and the fact that they have been proven successful in numerous studies. The following table (table: 2) provide a summery of research that has made use of TAM and IDT.

Undoubtedly, Internet marketing is a new type of end-user information system of Electronic Commerce, and EC is heavily based on telecommunication technologies (Kalakota and Whinston, 1996). A number of recent studies adopted TAM to study the acceptance of telecommunication technologies such as E-mail and WWW (Cheung, et al, 2000; Fenech, 1998; Gefen and Straub, 1997; Lederer, et al, 2000; Lin and Lu, 2000; Moon and Kim, 2001).

TAM is specifically designed to understand human behaviour in the domain of information system, and most of research projects in the recent years deal with technology innovation. Based on the more general theory of reasoned action, TAM has been tailored to explain computer usage (Rose and Straub, 1998:41). Lin and Lu (2000:197) found that TAM was able to explain behavior even in an Internet environment, accounting for 64% of the variance in usage. Consequently, it would appear that TAM can be used to study companies' acceptance of the Internet in B-to-B international marketing is a highly valid approach.

IDT, on the other hand, is a theory that has a long history of research in a great variety of disciplines including sociology, anthropology, marketing, and information system. The theory helps us to understand how and why an innovation is diffused into a social system (Rogers, 1995). B-to-B IIM is considered to be innovative because it has completely altered traditional marketing practice. Since this trend is still in its infancy, a well-researched theory, such as, IDT will help us to understand the process of using the Internet in B-to-B marketing.

In this research, which examines the diffusion of a new information technology into the marketing arena, we want to test the characteristics of Internet marketing in relative to business-to-business organisations. To this end we have considered the TAM and IDT models and adopted them to suit a marketing domain.

In fact researchers working with IDT have discovered similarities between the two constructs,

TABLE (2) SUMMERY OF RESEARCHES ON TAM AND IDT

Author(s)	Research Title	Results
Antonides et al, 1999	Adoption of payment systems in ten countries-a case study of diffusion of innovations	-This study concluded that the adoption process was almost exclusively driven by internal influences, i.e. social learning.
Cooper and Zmud, 1990	Information Technology Implementation	-The necessity that a technology be compatible with the organisation and its tasks. -The decision to implement an IT system depends on the alternatives available. -Technological complexity is a significant factor inhibiting implementation success. -Task-technology compatibility is a major factor in explaining the new technology adoption.
Davis et al, 1989	User Acceptance of Computer Technology: A Comparison of Two Theoretical Models.	- Intentions to use specific technology were correlated with system use. Perceived usefulness strongly influenced peoples' intentions. Perceived ease of use had a small but significant effect on intention as well. Attitudes only partially mediated the effects of these beliefs on intentions. These results suggest the possibility of simple but powerful models of the determinants of user acceptance.
Drury and Farhoomand, 1996.	Innovation Adoption of EDI	-Management attitudes are very important across the adoption stages. In comparing early and late adopters, significant differences are found particularly regarding information output, participation and involvement. Timing difficulties are found not to relate to product factors but to user issues.
Fenech, 1998	Using Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness to Predict Acceptance of the World Wide Web	-This study found a poor fit for TAM; it introduced a new construct, computer self-efficacy, to improve the model.
Ghorab, 1997.	The Impact of Technology Acceptance Consideration on System Usage, and Adopted Level of Technological Sophistication	-Based on a survey in UAE, the author found that users' perception towards the system affects the system usage and adopted level of technological sophistication.
Higgins and Hogan, 1999.	Internal Diffusion of High Technology Industrial Innovation	-This research confirms the significant positive relationship of cross-functional team spirit, top management support, and user involvement with the perceived success of information engineering implementation
Igbaria et al, 1997.	A Personal Computing Acceptance Factors in Small firms: A Structural Equation Model	-This study indicated that perceived usefulness had a great effect on system usage, and perceived ease of use was a key factor in explaining perceived usefulness and system usage.

Karahanna and Straub, 1999.	The Psychological Origins of Perceived Usefulness and Ease- of-Use.	-System use is affected by perceptions of the medium's usefulness. Medium's usefulness is affected by perceptions of ease of use of the medium, the degree of social influence exerted by supervisors, and perceptions of the social presence of the medium.
Lederer, 2000	The Technology Acceptance Model and the World Wide Web.	-Based on one hundred and sixty three respondents, the results support TAM. - Ease of understanding and ease of finding predict ease of use. - Information quality predicts usefulness for revisited sites.
Lin and Lu, 2000	Towards an Understanding of the Behavioural Intention to use a Web site.	The results showed that the Technology Acceptance Model fully mediated the usage behaviour even in the Internet environment, accounting for 64% of the variance in usage.
Moon and Kim, 2001	Extending TAM for a World Wide Web Context	-This study added playfulness to ease of use and usefulness to be fundamental in determining the acceptance of WWW.
Rose and Straub, 1998.	Predicting General IT use: Applying TAM to the Arabic world.	-This study provides insight into information technology adoption and use outside the technologically advanced world. TAM transferred successfully to the Arab world.
Straub et al, 1995	Measuring System Usage: Implications for IS Theory Testing	-This study factored system usage into self-reported system usage and computer-reported system usage. Computer-reported measures show weaker links to perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.
Straub and Brenner, 1997.	Testing the Technology Acceptance Model Across Cultures	-Based on comparing the TAM across 3 different countries: Japan, Switzerland, and US, the authors found that the model did not hold for all cultures.
Teo et al, 1999.	Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Internet Usage	-Usefulness and ease of use predicted Internet usage -Usefulness has a stronger effect on the Internet usage

namely "relative advantage" and "compatibility" on the one hand, and "IT adoption" on the other. Relative advantage is an incremental benefit to be gained by the use of one innovation over its competitors, whereas "compatibility" is the extent to which the technology is compatible with the user's prior experience. There are also similarities between " perceived usefulness" and " perceived ease of use" (Moore and Benbasat, 1991:197).

4. THEORETICAL MODEL

The next part of this study try to find out what factors may impact the adoption of the Internet for B-to-B international marketing activities.

4.1 Adopting the Internet for B-to-B IIM

The effect of attitudes on behaviour (Adoption or not Adoption) may be particularly important in the case of Internet Marketing. Understanding the internal effects may be of considerable importance in interpreting resistance to change and correctly evaluating the merits of post implementation strategies to reduce resistance. Consequently, this part of research tries to find out the main constructs of interest that might help in predicting the potential acceptance of the Internet in B-to-B international marketing.

In fact the main constructs of interest in this research are the three previously mentioned characteristics of using an innovation namely, perceived ease of use, perceive relative advantage (usefulness), and perceived compatibility.

4.2 Extending the TAM and IDT

As mentioned earlier, many authors have extended the TAM in an attempt to improve its ability to predict use (Chau, 1996; Igbaria, et al 1995; Gefen and Straub, 1997; Karahanna and Straub, 1999). Consequently, this study use exogenous, external variables such as drivers and barriers to use the Internet for marketing purposes, i.e., variables other than cognitive and normative beliefs, affect behaviour only through their impact on beliefs (e.g. PU and PEU).

4.2.1 B-to-B IIM drivers

External drivers, internal drivers, or both motivate B-to-B IIM. Naturally, external drivers relate to the increased level of global competition, the changes in the international customers' needs, recent developments in IT, and competition (Chaffey et al, 2000; Chan and Swatman, 2000; Cronin, 1996b; Hollensen, 2001; Poon and Jevons, 1997; Skinner, 1999; Venkatraman and Zaheer, 1990). Internal drivers are mainly related to changes in the organisational strategies and cost savings (Chaffey et al, 2000; Chan and Swatman, 2000; Cronin, 1996b; Mougayer, 1998; Simeon, 1999; Skinner, 1999).

External Drivers

The increasing level of competition in the global market has emphasised the need for organisational innovation to cope with global standards of products and services. Therefore, increasing knowledge and coordination of the company's processes that cross its marketing functions become the main desire of many companies seeking competitive advantage (Avlonitis and Karayanni, 2000; Poon and Jevons, 1997; Venkatraman and Zaheer, 1990). They approach the Internet as a tool to improve dramatically the businesses performance and leading them to a competitive position. Venkatraman and Zaheer (1990:377) stated that it could be reasonably argued that major reason for the consideration of IT-based applications as potential sources of strategic advantages lies in the capability for electronic integration among a set of firms that could potentially change the basis of competition in a market place.

Chan and Swatman (2000); Berezai (2000); Poon and Jevons (1997); Skinner, (1999) also believe that Internet marketing is driven by the never-ending needs of customers to look for better services and products. The growth in consumer use of the Internet, for both; leisure activities and as a retail channel has forced businesses to consider the Internet as a business tool (Berezai, 2000). The Internet emerged as a result of changing of the driving forces for E-Commerce. From an initial push to improve current business processes by adopting EDI to achieve savings and improve efficiency, the companies come to be driven by a desire for greater supplier involvement and customer service in later implementation (Chan and Swatman, 2000: 72). Competitors' use of the Internet and response to customers also has a strong effect on the adoption of the Internet for marketing purposes.

The Internet importance increase as it becomes involved in each task in today's business. This is a result of its growing ability to bring new opportunities, and facilitate the development of the new organisational forms and structures needed to meet the continuously emerging changes in business imperatives (Poon and Jevons, 1997). IT developments are also forcing organisations to be up-to-date in their use of advanced technologies regarding delivery of speedy and high quality information, as well as facilitating greater degrees of communication and integration across business units and external partners (Chan and Swatman, 2000:81). The development of software to create these systems, along with increasing awareness of the benefits that B-to-B can obtain from using the Internet is a key driver as well (Berezai, 2000:31).

Internal Drivers

But technology also drives organisational change at process, communications, and strategic level. Changes in organisational strategy may involve some Internet uses to bring about the new business desires. The organisation may set up a strategy that broadened the use of existing electronic trading technology to include the Internet as an alternative medium to bring about the new business desires (Chan and Swatman, 2000:77). However, many companies now have moved from using the Internet to provide basic company and product information to becoming an integral part of product and service launch strategies (Simeon, 1999:298).

Reducing costs by substituting the Internet for other communications channels with vendors, customers, information providers, and business partners may be a driver for many companies to

use the Internet (Cronin, 1996a: 21). B-to-B Internet use promises significant savings in costs. For example Skinner (1999:15) states that sellers can obtain many cost savings from the Internet. Including the reduction of costs in finding new customers and lower administration costs generated through timesaving and the reduction in staff numbers. Cronin (1996b) agree with Skinner that the Internet leads to cost savings achieved through substituting the Internet for other communication channels with vendors, information providers and business partners. For example, Mougayer (1998) Estimates that the average cost of producing and processing an invoice using a paper-based system is $199, which is 10 times greater than that of electronic processing. Finally, Business-to-Business relationships are often long term, making it more worthwhile for business to set up links between business partners. Besides, the volume of transaction is often higher, thereby justifying the outlay (Chaffey et al, 2000:435).

4.2.2 Barriers of B-to-B IIM

As mentioned early, the Internet can do many things today and more opportunities are likely to be available in the future. However, this does not mean that the Internet is a magic stick that can solve all marketing problems. Many authors have argued that the Internet has a number of limitations that need to be addressed in marketing strategy (Evans and King, 1999; Hollensen, 2001; Porter, 2001; Skinner, 1999; Soh et al 1997; Wilson and Abel, 2002).

When entering the global market there may be different barriers in each country: such as language barriers, cultural barriers, limited Internet access, different legislation, and logistical barriers (Hollensen, 2001:365). Furthermore, the Internet is not policed adequately and messages and credit card numbers can sometimes be intercepted. Though some devices such as firewall may protect internal data from theft, web users have fewer resources available for data protection. Visa, MasterCard, and others are working to define a better understanding way to secure payments based on encryption technology.

Another major problem of the Internet is information overload. The volume of information and sites on the Internet is growing exponentially (Wilson and Abel, 2002:93). There is no way at the current time to determine the wealth of information on the Internet in a meaningful format for all users. Soh et al (1997) found that major problems of the Internet use are the difficulty in locating the right information; the rising cost of Internet use, security, and data protection. Skinner (1999:129) stated that the problem is how to protect the current value chains, In other wards, new companies have no existing value chains to protect and so can set up their businesses in way that take advantages of the Internet. But companies that deal through others to reach end customers will need to weigh the importance of protecting current relationships with the distributors and partners that account for most of their current revenue against the advantage of establishing future strategic positions and revenue streams. Further limitations are outlined by Porter (2001:76) who observes:

- Customers cannot physically examine, touch and test products or get hands-on help in using or repairing them.
- Knowledge transfer is restricted to codified knowledge, sacrificing the spontaneity and judgement that can result from interaction with skilled personnel.
- The ability to learn about suppliers and customers (beyond their mere purchasing habits) is limited by the lack of face-to-face contact.
- The Lack of human contact with the customer eliminates a powerful tool for encouraging purchases, trading off terms and condition providing advice and reassurance, and closing deals.
- Delays are involved in navigating sites and finding information and are introduced by the requirement for direct shipments.
- Extra logistical costs are required to assemble, pack, and move small shipments.
- The absence of physical facilities circumscribes some functions and reduces a means to reinforce image and establish performance.
- Attracting new customers is difficult giving the sheer magnitude of available information and buying options.

Consequently, traditional activities, often adjusted in some way, can compensate for these limits, just as the shortcomings of traditional methods, such as lack of real time information, high cost of face to face interaction and high cost of producing physical versions of information can be offset by using the Internet technology. Frequently, in fact, a combination of Internet and traditional method can be mutually beneficial. Porter (2001:78) said that:

" Strategies that integrate the Internet and traditional competitive advantages and ways of

competing should win in many industries. On the demand side, most buyers will value a combination of on-line services, personal services, and physical locations over stand-alone Web distribution. They will want a choice of channels delivery options, and ways of dealing with companies. On the supply side, production and procurement will be more effective if they involve a combination of Internet and traditional methods".

The value of integrating traditional and Internet methods creates potential advantages for established companies. It will be easier for them to adopt and integrate Internet methods than for dot-coms to adopt and integrate traditional ones. The extended research model for this study is shown in figure (4).

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES

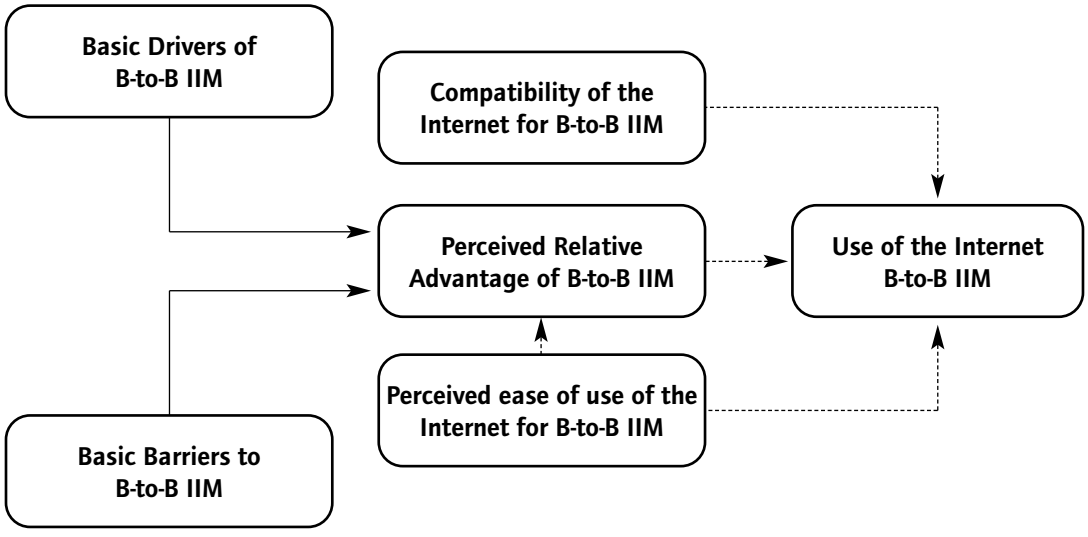
The research themes put forward in this paper serve as building blocks for the development of a holistic conceptual theory dealing with Internet use. Besides, the framework presented must be subjected to review, critique, and discussion for an extended period before getting general acceptance. An important result drawn from research in the fields of marketing, psychology and information systems, and sociology, is that limited cross feeding and integration of research results is occurring between work in information systems and computer use, personnel psychology and consumer decision making, as well as in communication studies (Gattiker et al, 2000:138). Undoubtedly, such a limited exchange of ideas across disciplines will further limit our understanding of how companies use the Internet in particular. Consequently, to understand how marketers feel, what they believe, and how these elements affect their use of the Internet, researchers should investigate these issues using an interdisciplinary approach to better explain various phenomena occurring on the Internet.

6. CONCLUSION

We began our research by looking at the IS/MIS domain for factors, which impact the adoption of the Internet by Business-to-Business companies. We believed that Technology Acceptance Model and Innovation Diffusion Theory might be applied to understanding of adoption of the Internet for Business-to Business companies. Based on the literature made on that research, the following factors seem to play an important role in adopting the Internet for marketing Purposes: 1) perceived ease of use of the Internet, 2) perceived relative advantage of the Internet, and 3) compatibility of the Internet.

Furthermore, the research has extended both TAM and IDT in an attempt to improve their ability to predict use of the Internet by B-to-B companies. Consequently, this research used exogenous, external variables such as drivers and barriers to use the Internet for marketing purposes, i.e., variables other than cognitive and normative beliefs, affect behaviour only through their impact on beliefs (e.g. PU and PEU).

FIGURE (4): THE BASIC INNOVATION CONSTRUCTS INCORPORATED IN THE RESEARCH MODEL



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