What motivates high school teachers to use web-based learning resources for classroom instruction? An exploratory case study in an Iranian smart school
Research Report

What motivates high school teachers to use web-based learning resources for classroom instruction? An exploratory case study in an Iranian smart school

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory case study reports on the findings of Persian teachers’ motivations and use of Fast-Web-based Learning Resources (FWLRs) in classroom instruction. Data were inductively gathered from ten teachers’ and five students’ use experiences of FWLRs in the context of a smart school in Tehran, Iran. Focus groups and face-to-face semi-structured interviews, repeated in several rounds, were used for data collection. Thematic analysis elaborates on the teachers’ perceived pedagogical usability of FWLRs. Five main motivations of pedagogical usability emerged from the findings: (a) desirability; (b) content accessibility; (c) student-centred teaching support; (d) multimedia interactivity; and (e) feasible classroom instruction via simulation. The study suggests that the effective use of Web-based Learning Resources (WBLs) would require some considerations, including the use context and corresponding educational policies. This can be of value to the researchers in the field as well as stakeholders of WBLs. In practice, this can support the development of effective and fun teaching-learning environments.

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1. Introduction

Due to the increased tendency toward learners’ digital literacy, Web-based Learning Resources (WBLs) as pedagogical tools are becoming increasingly important in classroom instruction. Previous research reveals that K-12 learners’ information use and behavior have changed from searching for, and using traditional resources to web resources (Berger, 2010; Murphy & Lefers, 2008; Rahimi, Des Brignon & Veen, 2012; Sada, Newby & Ertmer, 2012). Teachers are encouraged to use WBLs and social media in order to capture their students’ motivation as well as to improve the latter’s learning retention (Durgas, Kearsley, Kokkalis, & Lytras, 2014; Ray, Koozek, & Petarca, 2009; Light & Polin, 2010; Sillers, Haisla, & Tervani, 2011), and teachers believe by doing so would enable them to conduct student-centred learning more effectively (Abrizah & Jainah, 2011; Hadd, Sahatiano, Sediale, & Sternberg, 1999; Ray et al., 2009; Light & Polin, 2010; Prentice, 2012; Recker, Eder, & Reh, 2004; Sillies et al., 2011; Wu, Chen, & Hsiang, 2005).

The use of web-based technology in classroom instruction has been identified as the top priority in Iran, and deliberate efforts have been made to ensure that WBLs are embedded into wider professional teaching practice. However, Iranian teachers’ experience with the in-school use of web-technology may be less positive and remains a big challenge (Akbari, Jafar, Jahan, Sama, & Fou, 2009; Hosaini Jarkhani, 2006; Moradi & Khakhali, 2004; Naji, 2006; Shokr, Nairn, & Sanah, 2007). What constitutes the challenges in infusion and instruction of ICT in schools and the role teachers should play in the provision of teaching and learning with web-based technologies, however, has only started to be explored in the last few years in Iran. Iranian teachers’ lack of technological skills in integrating optimal web-based resources into the curriculum have been reported at the main reason for this challenge (Attaran, Aliak, & Siraj, 2012; Izadi, Tirdad, & Mirzaee, 2011). Studies have reported that the teachers experienced insufficient technical supports at school and limited access to the Internet (Salehi & Saberi, 2012), lack of pedagogical instruction to facilitate students conduct on Internet searches (Fatahi, Daktirani, & Saberi, 2011), and lack of positive attitude toward teaching in smart schools (Attaran & Siraj, 2012).

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This exploratory case study reports on the findings of Persian teachers’ motivation and use of Farsi-Web-based Learning Resources (FWBLRs) in classroom instruction. Data were inductively gathered from ten teachers’ and five students’ use experiences of FWBLRs in the context of a smart school in Tehran, Iran. Focus groups and face-to-face semi-structured interviews, repeated in several rounds, were used for data collection. Thematic analysis elaborate on the teachers’ perceived pedagogical usability of FWBLRs. Five main motivations of pedagogical usability emerged from the findings: (a) desirability; (b) content accessibility; (c) student-centred teaching support; (d) multimedia interactivity; and (e) feasible classroom instruction via simulation. The study suggests that the effective use of Web-based Learning Resources (WBLRs) would require some considerations, including the use context and corresponding educational policies. This can be of value to the researchers in the field as well as stakeholders of WBLRs. In practice, this can support the development of effective and fun teaching-learning environments.

**Keywords:** Evaluation of web resources - Farsi web resources - Pedagogical usability of learning web resources - Classroom instruction - Information quality - Iran

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