FEATURE ARTICLE

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The impact of self-efficacy on employees' ability to accept new technology in an Iraqi university

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In any environment, but particularly in a developing country such as Iraq, it is essential for institutes of higher education to readily adapt to and make the most productive use of the latest technologies. To assess these organizations' readiness for change, researchers conducted a study of 285 employees at Southern Technical University in Basrah, Iraq. In examining the factors that affect employees' ability to accept new technology, the researchers focused on the interactive role of general self-efficacy. The results show that employees' acceptance of new technology requires a high level of coordination among several external and internal variables that affect employees' engagement with the technology. The study also highlighted the importance of training to enhance employees' belief in their ability to successfully use new systems to achieve organizational goals.

1 | INTRODUCTION

A growing body of research argues that the interaction between humans and information technology (IT) cannot be understood when viewed separately (Montgomery, Sharafi, & Hedman, 2004). Although organizational leaders are well aware of the need to change their structures, procedures, processes, and techniques to maintain and sustain market competitiveness (Kwahk & Lee, 2008), they often face difficulties in convincing stakeholders of the need to change (Al-Abrrow, Alnoor, & Abbas, 2019). One major reason for this is individuals' perception of their interaction with technology (Al-Abrrow, Alnoor, & Abdullah, 2018).

Organizational readiness for change affects employees' perception of new technology, and this ultimately determines the success or failure of its implementation (Kwahk & Lee, 2008). In the sociotechnical system approach—which focuses on achieving excellence in both the human and technical aspects of work—human behavior toward technology is directed in a coherent and interactive manner, as new technologies affect work-related social relationships, feelings, and attitudes.

All organizations must respond to changes in technology so that they can continuously improve their processes

and keep pace with their competitors. This includes those that comprise the higher education sector in Iraq and strive to meet international standards in their field. To this end, university leaders in Iraq are seeking to better understand their employees' perception of organizational readiness for change (Eby, Adams, Russell, & Gaby, 2000).

Managers charged with implementing change need to provide a supportive environment that facilitates readiness for change and overcomes resistance to it (Alhamdi, Noor, Abdulla, Alnoor, & Eneizan, 2019). They also must recognize the impact of individuals' personal competencies and motivations on their willingness to accept change (Stouten, Rousseau, & De Cremer, 2018). This is of particular importance in Iraq, where many employees in higher education resist the introduction of new technology because they are used to old work practices or fear losing their job if technology takes over an increasing number of tasks. This reluctance has had an adverse effect on the development of higher education that country.

For managers in higher education and other organizations who want to defuse negative employee perceptions toward change, it would be helpful to identify the factors that might hinder positive perceptions, as well as

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