

Automatic Teller Machine Accessibility for Visually Impaired People: The Egyptian Context

¹Ahmed Hassan, ¹Rasha Abd El Aziz, ²Meer Hamza

¹BIS, CMT, AASTMT, Alexandria, Egypt

²CCIT, AASTMT, Alexandria, Egypt

Correspondence Author: Ahmed Hassan, BIS, CMT, Alexandria, Egypt

Email: ahmed.abdelsamie@aast.edu

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ABSTRACT

Although the number of disabled people is over 1 billion, comprising around 15% of the total population worldwide, with 253 million having visual impairment, still, services provided to disabled people in general and to those with visual disability in particular is understudied and requires further investigation; especially in the Egyptian context. ATMs are widely used all over Egypt and is becoming more and more utilized. Yet, ATMs are not accessible, and bank staff do not have the required ability or awareness to deal with visually impaired clients.

Thus, the study at hand investigates the challenges facing visually impaired people and the reasons preventing them from accessing ATMs, together with the key dimensions affecting ATM accessibility. A survey was conducted, where structured questionnaires were distributed over people with visual impairment, of which 426 responses were returned and considered valid. Data was statistically analyzed using structured equation modelling.

Research findings reveal that ease of use, facilitating conditions, efficiency, price value and reliability were proven to have a significant impact on ATM accessibility. This derived conclusion is considered a guiding line to decision makers at banks and governmental representatives..

Keywords: ATM, e-banking, accessibility, visual impairment, financial exclusion

INTRODUCTION

People with vision impairments have difficulty performing even the most basic everyday duties. Technology can sometimes exacerbate existing limitations rather than continuously delivering a solution in such situations. There are several reasons and obstacles, the most significant of which are a lack of standards for accessible interfaces and the range of requirements brought on by the extensive range of needs. The most important concern is for people with visual impairment to maintain daily privacy. When using a device in public, for example, ordinary people might mask the vision lines between curious passers-by and the screen. But the, visually impaired people can't check a photo before sharing it online to make ensure it doesn't include any sensitive information (Hussien and Abd El Aziz, 2017).

Approximately 1 billion people are disabled in some way. Most impaired people are in developing countries, with almost 80% (WHO, 2018). According to the Egyptian ministry (Raja, 2015), around 37 million Egyptian internet users (Abood et al., 2015; Hussien and Abd El-Aziz, 2019). In developing countries in general, particularly Egypt, e-banking is fast expanding, with bank clients conducting e-transactions (Llanto, 2015; Poushter, 2016). However, due to the Egyptian banking sector (Abd El Aziz et al., 2018), visually impaired clients cannot have their bank account or utilize internet banking. As a result, they rely on family or friends to transact. Although ATMs are considered widely accepted and used in Egypt, the visually impaired still encounter numerous use problems.

1.1. Research problem

Managing one's finances is a necessary component of independence and a daily chore. Managing finances is critical to keep their privacy and independence (Hassan et al., 2020). Although financial services are now used for various settlements, it is still considered not accessible for those visually impaired. Many people will be unable to access essential services due to a lack of accessible banking alternatives. Privacy could be jeopardized as well. For example, users may be forced to rely on third parties to manage their banking services, and thus putting them at greater risk of identity theft.

Even though the technology exists, and banks offer services online. Yet, ATMs are still inaccessible, and employees have little training or experience dealing with blind or visually impaired customers. ATMs also lack the necessary equipment for those with vision impairments to utilize them. As a result, most banks in Egypt refuse to interact with blind or visually impaired people, effectively excluding them from the financial system and risking their privacy. Several scholars have looked into the digital divide, but visually impaired people in Egypt have not been recognized in this regard. To be accessible to all prospective consumers, banks must pay attention to those visually impaired by considering the users' human characteristics, abilities, competencies, and functional capacities. Unfortunately, however, the barriers to e-banking for those with visual disabilities remain undiscovered (Okonji and Ogwezzy 2018).

As such, the purpose of this study is to examine the range of obstacles that visually impaired people have when using ATMs in Egypt and the factors that contribute to the visually impaired and their ability to have a bank account independently. Additionally, the study tries to determine the primary characteristics affecting ATM accessibility. Finally, the project aims to construct a prototype ATM system accessible to all.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Visual impairment is a vision impairment that impacts educational achievement even after treatment. It can range from impaired eyesight to no vision (Zitkus et al., 2016). Those with no vision are considered blind and are the subject of this study, as is the viewpoint of visually impaired individuals, where around 85% live in developing countries (WHO, 2018). They have classified into the following categories: difficulty to see images precisely, loss of visual field, failure to spot subtle differences in the level of brightness or are sensitive to light (Ahmed et al., 2017).

As a result of the negligible attention paid to visually impaired people in Egypt, there isn't an up-to-date exact number of those impaired. Around 10.7% of the total population in Egypt are disabled (SIS, 2017). In addition, there is a general lack of understanding concerning visually impaired persons and their care in Egypt. Due to a lack of information, many parents of visually impaired children may mistakenly refer to their child as blind, apart from the lack of technology-based courses that are tutored at schools that might assist students with visual disabilities in their scholastic pursuits (Marshall et al. 2009).

2.1 Electronic banking accessibility

The World Wide Web Consortium (2008) primarily provides Internet accessibility standards - an international group makes various suggestions to guarantee that websites are accessible to individuals with impairments (Laukkanen, 2016). The World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) recommendations address the accessibility and usability of websites for individuals with disabilities (Raja et al., 2015). In many developed countries, ethical issues for making websites accessible are of great concern. In these countries, various factors eliminate the exclusion of people with disabilities from accessing financial services.

2.2 Automatic Teller Machine Accessibility

ATMs are computerized electronic telecommunications equipment that securely enables bank customers to access their bank accounts. ATMs accept deposits and cash withdrawals. Customers can also use ATMs to do various other financial tasks, including checking their balance, paying bills, changing their PIN, and requesting a mini statement. Numerous banks have installed talking ATMs in Turkey, Canada, Australia, the USA and UK (Uildemolins et al., 2012). ATMs that talk give audio instructions, allowing visually impaired individuals to operate the machine independently (RNIB, 2012). Auditory information is transmitted privately. The customer receives information via audio or a text-to-speech application. In the United States of America, the court stipulated that braille signs and voice guidance should be provided to help visually impaired people. When establishing or changing ATMs, owners should adhere to the given requirements. The Australian Bankers' Association and the Indian Bankers' Association enacted broad ATM accessibility rules that address accessibility, emphasizing disabled consumers (Gupta, 2014). On the other hand, many corporate organizations in developing nations have yet to comply with W3C requirements, and many persons with disabilities continue to struggle with internet access (Chigona et al., 2009; Venkatesh and Sykes, 2013).

The BNP Pariba bank created the "An Accessible Bank for All" program to assist clients that are disabled in conducting banking operations in the most convenient manner possible. Certain accessibility features are built into the software that runs on their ATMs. Since 2010, all BNP Pariba's ATMs users have been allowed to make voice-assisted withdrawals.

2.3 Challenges of those visually impaired

Individuals with visual disabilities are disadvantaged when it comes to e-banking. They even incur additional expenditures due to the central bank's higher administrative charges for currency deposits and withdrawals. These benefits are not available to those with visual disabilities because they lack access to technology-enhanced financial transaction platforms (Warren, 2007; Wentz et al., 2018). When creating an e-banking channel, it must be guaranteed that it is accessible without excluding any category. Banking facilitated by ICT can include people with various requirements and preferences. For example, ATMs with voice output or Braille writing can aid those with various disabilities and limited literacy and language problems (G3ict, 2015).

Screen readers are considered software that analyses the information of a computer's screen and converts them to a format that is not digital. This could be provided in voice via speakers or braille, or both. It enables blind people to hear instead of seeing what's on the screen (Edwards and Launikonis, 2008).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study determines the barriers that the visually impaired confront in Egyptian banking and the key drivers of ATM accessibility. A survey strategy is a technique that will be applied in this research. A random sample is drawn to represent the Egyptian visually impaired. This technique is deemed appropriate since it permits rapid data collection and the rapid identification of significant responses. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies to capitalize on the strengths of both (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This is understandable because qualitative research enables a more in-depth and nuanced grasp of the issue. On the other hand, quantitative analysis allows greater freedom to generalize results and data manipulation.

Questionnaires are deemed appropriate to survey people with visual impairment and collect data for statistical analysis (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, focus groups are beneficial for eliciting specific information about the group's emotions and views (Jackson and Bazeley, 2019). Although testing users for accessibility via experiments is an expensive and time-consuming process, experiments are regarded as the most effective way for detecting accessibility concerns (Brajnik et al., 2010). Finally, conclusions and recommendations about e-banking accessibility are developed using statistical and interpretive analyses in conjunction with the examined literature.

3.1 The research variables

Efficiency: Based on the UTAUT, efficiency has a positive impact on ATM use (Bhatiasevi, 2016; Martins et al., 2014).

Ease of Use: Users develop a sense of connection with accessible technologies (Alalwan et al., 2017; Shareef et al., 2017; Liebana-Cabanillas et al., 2017).

Facilitating conditions: refers to the belief in infrastructure that facilitates using the system and numerous studies demonstrated that FC has a beneficial effect on usage (Dwivedi et al., 2017A; Rana et al., 2016; Yu, 2012; Shaikh and Karjaluo, 2015).

Price value (PV): Users usually compare the price paid to the discounts received for continued use (Baabdullah, 2018). However, in the case of ATMs, consumers will become significantly less willing to continue using the technology if the service providers increase their prices (Njenga and Ndlovu, 2012)

Reliability: Reliability has a significant impact on technology use (Peters et al., 2016; Zhou, 2011; Upadhyay and Jahanyan, 2016).

ATM Accessibility: Yoon and Steege (2013) define ATM accessibility/usability as factors that positively affect ATM (Hasbullah et al., 2016).

4. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The research framework and hypotheses development are illustrated in this section. Figure 1 depicts the ATM accessibility framework adopted in the Egyptian context. Research hypotheses were devised and shown as follows:

H1: Efficiency has a positive impact on ATM Accessibility

H2: Ease of Use has a positive impact on ATM Accessibility

H3: Facilitating Conditions has a positive impact on ATM Accessibility

H4: Price has a positive impact on ATM Accessibility

H5: Reliability has a positive impact on ATM Accessibility

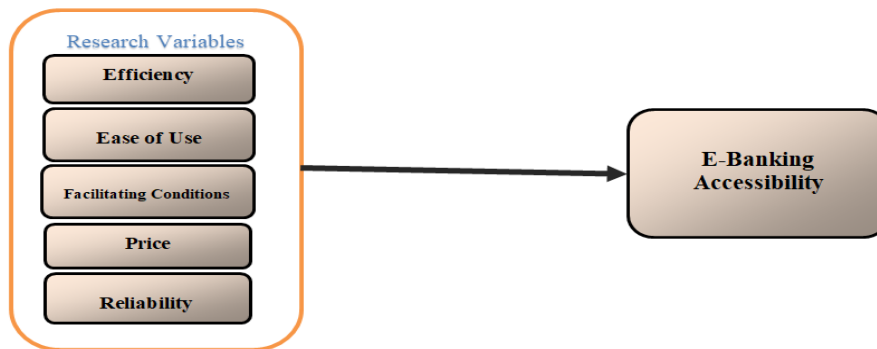


Figure 1: Research Framework

This section illustrates the descriptive analysis of the research variables. Correlation and SEM are used to test the hypothesis using SPSS and AMOS. This section measures the effect of the research variables on accessibility according to ATMs.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Research Variables

Table 1 illustrates the mean values and standard deviation for the constructs

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for Constructs

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Frequency				
				1	2	3	4	5
Efficiency	426	3.6831	.53185	0	4	137	275	10
Ease of use	426	3.5423	.56929	0	2	205	205	14
Facilitating Conditions	426	3.7441	.53821	0	2	124	281	19
Price value	426	3.5915	.55078	0	1	184	229	12
Reliability	426	3.7230	.57663	0	3	137	261	25
Accessibility	426	4.0540	.63201	0	0	74	255	97

4.2 Normality Testing for the Research Variables

Table 2 illustrates the informal test of normality, where the skewness and kurtosis values are all within the acceptable range.

Table 2: Informal Test of normality

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Efficiency	426	-.489	.118	-.195	.236
Ease of use	426	.295	.118	-.721	.236
Facilitating Conditions	426	-.294	.118	-.035	.236
Price value	426	.099	.118	-.881	.236
Reliability	426	-.117	.118	-.174	.236
Accessibility	426	-.043	.118	-.493	.236

Table 3 illustrates the fit indices and thresholds for the measurement model

Table 3: Fit Indices and Thresholds for Measurement Model

Measure	Results	Threshold
Chi-square/df	4.157	< 2 excellent; < 3 good; < 5 sometimes permissible
P-value	0.000	> 0.05
GFI	0.954	> 0.80
AGFI	0.883	> 0.80
NFI	0.957	> 0.80
TLI	0.929	> 0.85
CFI	0.966	> 0.80
RMR	0.009	< 0.09
RMSEA	0.086	< 0.10

Figure 2 illustrates the confirmatory factor analysis and factor loadings are on arrows showing good loadings > 0.4

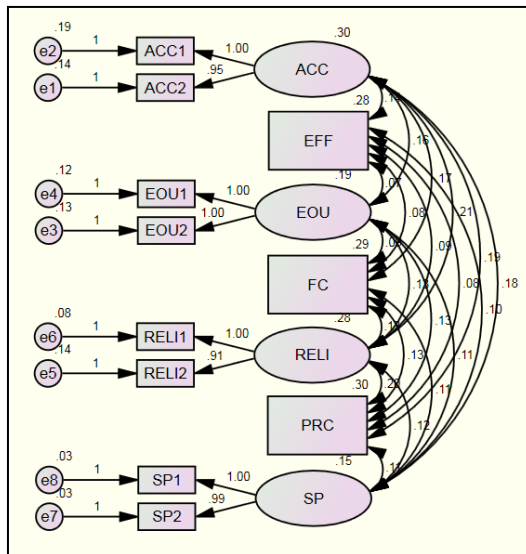


Figure 2: CFA for the Measurement Model

Table 4 shows that all factor loadings (FL) are greater than or equal to 0.40, implying that the constructs under study have adequate validity. Also, all the P-values < 0.05.

Table 4: Item Loading after Confirmatory Factor Analysis

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
ACC2	<---	ACC	.948	.057	16.764	***
ACC1	<---	ACC	1.000			
EOU2	<---	EOU	.997	.080	12.509	***
EOU1	<---	EOU	1.000			
RELI2	<---	RELI	.908	.056	16.256	***
RELI1	<---	RELI	1.000			
SP2	<---	SP	.985	.038	25.888	***
SP1	<---	SP	1.000			

4.3 Testing Research Hypotheses

Table 5 illustrates the correlation between variables. P-values are less than 0.05 and correlation coefficients are 0.471, 0.572, 0.525, 0.577, and 0.596.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix between Research Variables and Accessibility

		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Efficiency	Spearman Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	426					
2. Ease of use	Spearman Correlation	.266**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	426	426				
3. Facilitating Conditions	Spearman Correlation	.291**	.362**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	N	426	426	426			
4. Price value	Spearman Correlation	.280**	.498**	.440**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			
	N	426	426	426	426		
5. Reliability	Spearman Correlation	.289**	.480**	.408**	.628**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	426	426	426	426	426	
6. Accessibility	Spearman Correlation	.471**	.572**	.525**	.577**	.596**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	426	426	426	426	426	426

Table 6 illustrates structural equation modeling analysis. Estimate values are 0.354, 0.231, 0.226, 0.213, and 0.184, P-values < 0.05. Furthermore, $R^2 = 0.699$, revealing that 69.9 % of the Accessibility variation could be represented by the research model.

Table 6: SEM Analysis of Research Variables on Accessibility

			Estimate	P	R ²
Accessibility	<---	Efficiency	.354	***	.699
Accessibility	<---	Ease of use	.231	***	
Accessibility	<---	Facilitating Conditions	.226	***	
Accessibility	<---	Price value	.213	***	
Accessibility	<---	Reliability	.184	***	

CMIN/DF = 3.284, GFI = 0.982, CFI = 0.982, AGFI= 0.928, and RMSEA = 0.073 are all within range. The SEM model conducted for the effect of the Research Variables on Accessibility is demonstrated in Figure 3.

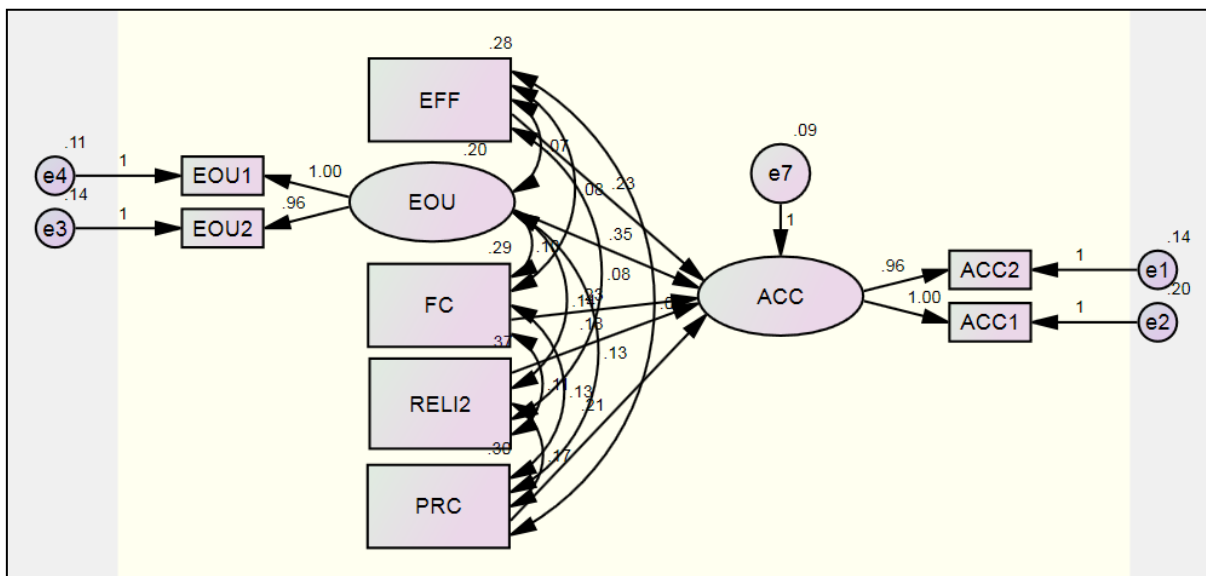


Figure 3: SEM for Research Variables on Accessibility

The research findings show a positive impact between Efficiency, Ease of Use, Facilitating Conditions, Price Value, Reliability and Accessibility (P-value < 0.05). Therefore, all previously mentioned hypotheses are fully supported.

4. CONCLUSION

Individuals with visual disabilities have faced numerous obstacles in several sectors. The banking industry, in particular, has posed numerous difficulties for those with visual impairment. This research examines the challenges that face people with visual disabilities and the factors that prevent them from independently utilizing E-banking services, particularly ATMs, which infringe on their privacy. Additionally, the study identifies the major constructs that influence ATM accessibility.

Based on the study results, visually impaired people have many accessibility challenges when dealing with ATMs, such as they cannot see the ATM commands and do not have an alternative way to deal with the ATM. Accordingly, this study recommends making all Egyptian ATMs more accessible by making all ATM commands (such as deposit money, withdraw money, balance enquiry) read aloud by text to speech engine. Also, the study suggests implementing a mobile application that enables those visually impaired to use the ATM through their mobile reader and NFC connection. This study paves the way for both academics and decision-makers to realize the problem at hand, thus providing guidelines to reduce the gap and enhance financial inclusion.

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