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Critical Perspectives

An assessment of students' acceptance and usage of computer supported collaborative classrooms in hospitality and tourism schools

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ABSTRACT

Technological advancements have become important feature of hospitality and tourism educational plans to improve learning experiences of students within schools. It is vital for these schools to assess if technologies do influence the perceptions and behaviour of their target beneficiaries. This study aims to explain the factors affecting students' acceptance and usage of computer supported collaborative classrooms in a hospitality and tourism school based on the Extended Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) model. The study is established using causal research design in order to examine the cause-effect relationship between the study variables. Sample of the study consists of 222 students recruited via campus email as respondents. Data is collected using a five-point Likert scale covering UTAUT2's factors and variables featuring acceptance and usage of computer supported collaborative classrooms. Partial least squares based structural equation modelling is used to analyse the data. Findings show that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, price-value, hedonic motivation and habit have significant influence on students' acceptance and usage of these computer supported collaborative classrooms. Responding to the need of studies validating the UTAUT2 model in the adoption and use of different technologies, this study contributes to the literature by extending the UTAUT2 into the context of computer supported collaborative classrooms. These results also provide a useful framework for hospitality and tourism schools to successfully implement experience-enhancing technologies such as computer supported collaborative classrooms.

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1. Introduction

There is growing evidence that collaborative learning methods encourage knowledge and skill development by engaging students dynamically in the learning process and moving them away from the role as spectators in the classroom (Jackson, Brummel, Pollet, & Greer, 2013). With the increasing use of technology, the last two decades have seen a substantial increase in the development of new and different approaches to collaborative education that have created a global impact (Chow,

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2013). Nonetheless, the incorporation of technology into collaborative educational approaches has led to a leaner, supportive, and flexible educational system (Lee, 2010). Many developed countries including United States, Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand and United Kingdom etc. have undertook large budgeted projects in order to integrate technological advancements into their educational environments (Cheng, 2009; Chow, 2013; Makki & Makki, 2012; Türel, 2011). To conclude, these technological advancements not only support the traditional learning but also complement new forms of learning by using information-related technologies to create experiences that support the learning process of students (Stantchev, Colomo-Palacios, Soto-Acosta, & Misra, 2014).

One of the main objectives of higher education in today's information technology enabled classroom is to make students more active in the learning process (Saadé, Morin, & Thomas, 2012). Among the tools available to do so are the computer supported collaborative learning (CSCL) systems. These systems include various technical applications that can be used to facilitate collaborative and distributed teaching and learning including internet, emails, electronic bulletin boards, special applications for CSCL and different multimedia/hypermedia applications etc. These systems are now implemented in classrooms to transform the classrooms into computer supported collaborative classrooms (CSCC). Both, the features of the applied technology and its implementation, support the higher levels of coordination and cooperation among the students studying together in a class (Voyiatzaki & Avouris, 2014).

Since these CSCCs are developed to support student learning through collaboration and cooperation, understanding the adoption behaviours of these technologies is important; because acceptance is a prerequisite for participation (Stantchev et al., 2014). Most of the studies on the adoption and usage of computer supported systems have mainly explored the technical and operational issues surrounding its access and use. Few have addressed issues around the students' adoption of such systems and its implications for teaching and learning, specifically students of hospitality and tourism discipline (Gorissen, van Bruggen, & Jochems, 2012). Considering the importance of students' adoption of these technologies, examining the factors shaping the acceptance and use of CSCC is an important stage. Therefore, the current study attempts to investigate hospitality and tourism students' acceptance and usage of CSCC by using the Extended Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) as the theoretical base (Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012). In addition, unlike many prior studies were conducted in developed countries such as USA, Korea and New Zealand (Yang, 2013), this study examines the determinants of the adoption and usage of CSCC in Malaysia – a developing country. As per Iqbal and Qureshi (2012), the state of technology and the social structure of developing countries are different from developed countries, warranting further investigation. In addition, Malaysia is striving to achieve the status of a high-income and knowledge-based economy by producing highly skilled graduates. Consequently, Malaysian higher education sector comprises of 20 public universities, 53 private universities and 6 foreign university branch campuses; 403 active private colleges, 30 polytechnics and 73 public community colleges; resulting in increased competition for these institutes to survive (Ali, Zhou, Husain, Nair, & Ragavan, 2016). To deal with the competitive pressure, higher educational institutions are looking for developing strategic advantages including implementation of technological advancements into their educational environments (Jackson et al., 2013). Hence, considering the differences between develop and developing countries and the rapid implementation of technology in Malaysian universities, it becomes necessary for researchers to understand how students perceive, accept and use these technological advancements. Thus, this study contributes to the literature by extending the UTAUT2 into the context of CSCC at a hospitality and tourism school in a developing country and answer the following research question.

1.1. What are the factors that develop students' acceptance (intention to use) and usage of CSCCs?

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The next section presents the review of the literature and hypotheses. Following that, the methodology used for sample selection and data collection is discussed. Then, data analysis and results are examined. Finally, the paper ends with a discussion of research findings, future research and concluding remarks.

2. Literature review

Unified Theory of the Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) was proposed by Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis (2003) to explain the factors that affect the acceptance and usage of ICTs by employees. It was proposed based on experimental combination of eight distinct theoretical models taken from sociological and psychological theories utilized in the literature to explain the acceptance and use of a new technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003). UTAUT has become a widely used model to study applications of ICTs in various contexts including mobile banking (Zhou, Lu, & Wang, 2010); mobile phone technologies (Zhou, 2011); location-based services (Xu, & Gupta, 2009); Internet banking (Riffai, Grantb, & Edgarc, 2012); e-government (Schaupp, Carter, & McBride, 2010); e-recruiting (Laumer, Eckhardt, & Trunk, 2010); and virtual learning technologies (Wang, Wu, & Wang, 2009).

UTAUT includes four essential determining components of behavioural intention or use behaviour towards the acceptance of the technology i.e., performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), facilitating conditions (FC), and social influence (SI). In order to adapt this model for consumers' acceptance and usage of technologies, Venkatesh et al. (2012) proposed the Extended Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) by integrating three new constructs i.e., hedonic motivation, price value and habit into the existing UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2012). These three new factors are