

Chapter 12

Technology Adoption in Online Tutorial

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ABSTRACT

Technology enabled academic delivery in most of the developing countries is plagued with the problems of poor utilization of such apparently so promising mediums. The students' attitudes towards the utilization of such technologies have not been sufficiently investigated in research literature. Focusing on the students experience in adopting technology especially in online tutorial, an online survey was carried out on a sample of 96 respondents analyzing with Structural Equation Model. The result showed that usefulness and ease of use positively correlated to the attitude of students in using the online tutorial. The study of these students' attitudinal behaviors gives rise to a new perspective in the design of ODL systems. The author argues that use of technology to explore customized solutions for the socioeconomically disadvantaged communities need to be a carefully planned process in which prospective target communities should participate as a co-designer.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The success of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) systems in any society will ultimately depend upon how best they can put in place Innovative and Flexible systems of Information dissemination, Programme Offerings, Student Support and Quality Assurance (Belawati T & Zuhairi A, 2007). Web based technologies open up a range of possibilities to develop such solutions. However technology per se is not the ultimate solution to accomplish the objectives. It's a challenge to assess how the prospective clientele will ultimately perceive the technology enabled solutions and utilize such solutions for their course completion. Challenges are uniformly the same across the developing countries; however it is even more difficult in a country like Indonesia where prospective clientele of ODL systems comes largely from rural backgrounds, lives in sparsely distributed rural interiors and are not much familiar with the culture of technology. It makes the job of distance educators much more challenging in such a situation.

The Open University of Indonesia is still struggling to properly assimilate the technological solutions in their academic delivery strategies. Though the technological solutions are gradually becoming part of the programme offerings in Indonesia and many institutions have begun to experiment with modern ICT-based courses we find that access and participation by students is still relatively low (Belawati T & Zuhairi A, 2007). It is the challenge for Open University in Indonesia to socialize and educate students, educators and the society in using ICT facilities for ODL enterprise (Belawati T & Zuhairi A, 2007).

Integrating Technology in Student Support

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) for teaching learning practices in distance education has experienced rapid growth across the world and is gaining popularity gradually. However its usage is primarily confined to those pockets where technology has become part of people's life. In those areas where the technology has not yet penetrated, the people's response to any technological intervention is not very spontaneous.

Majority of the clientele of Universitas Terbuka (UT) lives in such resource starved areas. Therefore the internet usage for students' support particularly in distance education is still in infancy in Indonesia. However, Universitas Terbuka (UT) is one of those few educational institutions in Indonesia which are gradually trying to utilize web based services to enhance the reach of their students support services. University provides online services to support students' learning which

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