Chapter XI

Factors Influencing the Acceptance of Web-Based Online Education for Thai Educators: Impact of Thai Culture and Values

Orasa Tetiwat and Sid L. Huff
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Online education has become widely used and accepted in many universities, especially in North America and Europe, since in the early 1990s. However, its adoption and use in developing countries such as Thailand is at an earlier stage. Many Thai educators are still hesitant to deploy online education for their courses. Many factors affect their decisions to accept online education. Thus, there is a need for research in this area so that educators can plan and prepare in deploying online education. The main objective of this chapter is to investigate the factors that influence Thai educators in accepting online education and highlight how Thai culture and values have an effect on these influencing factors. The framework of this

study is based on three adoption and acceptance theories: the Diffusion of Innovation theory (DOI), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

In-depth interviews were conducted with 22 Thai educators who have used or managed online courses in 12 Thai universities. The findings indicate that the five most influential factors are control beliefs regarding *availability of technology, cost of computer technology and Internet access,* and *accessibility to technology* and behavioral beliefs regarding *compatibility, and relative advantage.* Other important factors (from top six to top ten ranking) include the user's attitude towards IT, the behavioral beliefs concerning *student demand, complexity of online education and trialability,* as well as the control belief concerning *institutional policy.* Less influential factors include control beliefs regarding *government policy, management support, ethical considerations, and language barrier,* as well as the normative beliefs regarding *group influence.* Influencing factors that are impacted by Thai culture and values are compatibility, group influence by supervisors, management support and institution's policy, government policy, and language barrier.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the expansion of communication technology, and especially the Internet, many institutions have begun using the World Wide Web in order to deliver online education. However, web-based online education (hereafter referred to as online education) is still at an earlier stage in Thai institutions. Thai educators are still hesitant to deploy online education for their courses. A variety of factors affect their decisions regarding whether or not to accept online education. Research is needed to identify and understand these factors, so that educators and leaders of educational institutions can better plan and prepare deployment of online education. The main objective of this chapter is to investigate the factors that influence Thai educators in accepting online educational mechanisms, and the ways in which Thai culture and values influence these factors.

This chapter is organized into seven sections. The first section introduces the concept, components and functions of online education, and how it can be used in higher educational institutions. The second section covers Thai culture and values. The third section explains education system and online education in Thailand. The fourth section describes three based theories of technology adoption/acceptance: Diffusion of Innovation theory (DOI), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and also proposes the research framework used in the study. The next section explains research methodology,

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