Chapter 1

Current Studies Based on the Investigation of the Attitudes Towards the Internet in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the chapter is to analyze the most recent studies on attitudes towards the internet in higher education. In recent years, there have been studies that focus on investigating the attitudes of students and teachers towards the use of internet in higher education. Thematic content analysis was used to investigate the studies conducted in the period 1998-2018 to measure the attitudes towards the internet. The thematic content analysis of the studies determined establishing the following three categories: 1) studies focused on investigating attitudes towards the implications of internet use; 2) studies based on identifying the relationship between attitudes towards the Internet and different variables; 3) studies centered on exploring attitudes of different members of higher education. The analysis of studies over the last 20 years contributes to determine the action directions for initiating new studies in this field.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has an important contribution to modernizing the process of learning and teaching in higher education. The Internet provides students and teachers with independence and utility in academic activities, which has positive effects on attitudes towards the Internet-based learning environment (Lee et al, 2005).

Improving students' abilities in using the Internet has become a current requirement in the academic environment. The students appreciate the usefulness of the information and communication technologies. They have positive feelings while using the Internet and feel confident in the independent control of Internet use (Peng et al., 2006). The Internet is a means of gaining access to different types of online knowledge and sharing them as well as collaborating with group colleagues (Zhang et al., 2014). The Internet is used in the educational environment to support the process of learning and teaching, both in face-to-face and distance learning (Cocorada, 2016). With the help of the Internet, students can easily and quickly access learning materials. Also, using the Internet offers students the opportunity to take responsibility for informing and creating learning experiences in the academic environment or in their community. Students will learn how to communicate with others about their subjects and research projects. Together with the benefits it presents, the use of the Internet can also lead to a number of negative effects. The use of the Internet in academic activities has encouraged the tendency to deceive during presentations and exams. Easy access to information and relevant materials leads students to study content briefly, leading to superficiality in knowledge (Shneiderman, 1998). Research on Internet attitudes has shown that users who use it less often have little confidence in their ability to use and progress in technology (Cazan et al., 2016). Otherwise, the confidence in information technologies and their positive influence on people's and society's well-being reduces the anxiety towards Internet. The use of the Internet for educational purposes should become commonplace in all universities, as it offers opportunities for students to adapt to new technologies, which leads to a favourable attitude towards the Internet. Israel (2013) identified the main advantages of educational usage of the internet: flexibility and variety, ease and low cost of access, ease and low cost of setting information online, ease of updating information, information resources.

The use of the Internet in educational activities has the potential to motivate both students and university professors by increasing participation and interaction in classes, by involving participants more actively in learning and facilitating an integrated curricular approach. Internet-based teaching strategies create specific challenges for both the instructor and the student (Stoney & Wild, 1998). Educators

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