

Chapter 58

The Effect of Gender on Associations between Driving Forces to Adopt ICT and Benefits Derived from that Adoption in Medical Practices in Australia

Rob Macgregor

University of Wollongong, Australia

Peter Hyland

University of Wollongong, Australia

Charles Harvey

University of Wollongong, Australia

ABSTRACT

Like other Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), medical practices can gain a great deal by adopting and using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Unlike other SMEs, little is known about General Practitioners' (GPs) perceptions of the benefits of ICT use or about the differences between these perceptions by male and female GPs. This chapter reports a survey of these perceptions of the drivers for and benefits of ICT use by male and female GPs in Australia.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of affordable Internet-based information and communications technology (ICT) has led the medical and healthcare sectors to explore the use of such technologies to improve patient care

and reduce business inefficiencies within General Practice (GP). This has been recognised by the World Health Assembly, who, in 1997, saw technology as one of many parts of sustainable health systems and, in 2005, saw technology as a means of leveraging health-for-all through the interchange of information and communications (Kirigia, Seddoh, Gatwiri, Muthuri & Seddoh, 2005). From

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-3886-0.ch058

the late 90's studies began to appear detailing the design of clinical ICT systems (see for example Baldwin, Clarke & Jones, 2002; Pelletier-Fleury et al., 1999; Hsu et al. 2005), the use of such systems within medical practices (Ammenwerth, Mansmann, Iller, & Eichstadter, 2003; Catalan, 2004; Shohet & Lavy, 2004; Waring and Wainwright, 2002;) and, more recently, the decision-making behind ICT adoption (Didham, Martin, Wood, Harrison, 2004; MacGregor, Harvie, Hyland and Lee, 2007; Pan & Pokharel, 2007). Studies, for example, in New Zealand (Didham et al 2004), showed that time, costs and perceived lack of IT skill were important considerations for GPs when evaluating ICTs. Lee Cain, Chockley and Burstin (2005) found practice size and standardisation of work were of concern to many doctors, while Simon et al (2007) found practice size (both in terms of patient numbers and staff numbers) and the type of care being offered were statistically associated with the perception of both drivers for and barriers against ICT adoption.

Along with the studies examining the ICT adoption process, there have been a number of studies detailing the potential benefits derivable from ICT adoption and use in general practices. El-Sayed & Westrup (2003), for example, suggest that ICT use in medical practices improves communication within and outside the practice, makes the business side of the practice more effective and helps build new business initiatives. Baldwin et al (2002) suggest that ICTs support and enable complex interactions between GPs, consultants, patients, nurses and, in some cases, equipment. Fors & Moreno (2002) suggest that ICTs, in medical practices, alter day-to-day procedures, making the overall final product more effective, while Ray & Mukherjee (2007) note the use of ICT to promote governance and planning.

While there have been studies investigating both the driving forces behind ICT adoption and the benefits derived from that adoption, there have been no studies that have attempted to determine whether giving priority to one driving force over another

leads to a perception of improvement to specific benefits. Similarly, while there have been a number of studies that have explored gender differences in the adoption and use of internet-based technology (Kolsaker & Payne, 2002; Rodgers & Harris, 2003; Oudshoorn, Rommes, & Stienstra, 2004; Yang & Lester, 2005), there have been no studies aimed at determining the relationship between priority given to driving forces and perceived benefits of ICT adoption between male and female GPs.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether the relationship between priority given to driving forces and perceived benefits of ICT adoption differs between male and female GPs. The chapter begins by examining the nature of ICT in medical practices, in particular the driving forces behind the adoption process and benefits derivable from their adoption and use. As medical practices in Australia are almost all specialised small businesses, the chapter examines gender differences both from a small business perspective as well as from a medical perspective. The chapter presents a study of 196 GPs (128 males, 68 females) who have adopted ICT in their practice. A series of factor analyses is applied to the driving forces behind ICT adoption to determine the groupings of driving forces and the groupings of benefits for male and female GP respondents. Using these groupings a partial least square model was developed and tested to determine whether there are gender differences in the association between perception of importance of driving forces and perception of subsequent benefits.

The Nature of ICT in Medical Practice

The nature of ICT in medical practice differs widely in the literature. At the 'cutting edge' the use of ICT involves functions such as knowledge management and knowledge translation (Ho et al 2004), video and audio components and the use of imaging equipment (Baldwin et al 2002), multiple site education (Kuruvilla, Dzenowagis, Pleasant & Dwivedi, 2004) and distance clinical treatment

20 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/effect-gender-associations-between-driving/76012

Related Content

Profiling Small and Medium Enterprises' Innovativeness During Periods of Economic Crisis: A Case Study From a Greek Region Using Strategic Groups

Ioannis Antoniadis, Elpida Tryfon Samara and Thomai Karamitsou (2020). *Entrepreneurial Development and Innovation in Family Businesses and SMEs* (pp. 125-148).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/profiling-small-and-medium-enterprises-innovativeness-during-periods-of-economic-crisis/257091

CSR Initiatives of Family Firms: An Analysis of Mexican Business Groups

Salvador S. Guajardo, Aurora Correa-Flores, Barbara I. Mojarro-Durán and Alfonso Ernesto Benito Fraile (2019). *Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurial Leadership and Competitive Strategy in Family Business* (pp. 149-172).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/csr-initiatives-of-family-firms/225653

Knowledge Sharing among Employees in the Manufacturing SMEs

Uchenna Cyril Eze, Sim Fong Hah and Nelson Oly Ndubisi (2013). *Small and Medium Enterprises: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1426-1444).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/knowledge-sharing-among-employees-manufacturing/76025

Ontological Representation of Virtual Business Communities: How to Find Right Business Partners

Ingrid Petric, Tanja Urbancic and Bojan Cestnik (2011). *Innovations in SMEs and Conducting E-Business: Technologies, Trends and Solutions* (pp. 263-277).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/ontological-representation-virtual-business-communities/54180

Microfinance: Financial Sustainability vs. Social Outreach

Nuno Miguel Delicado Teixeira, Boguslaw Sardinha, Rui Brites and Rosa Galvão (2023). *Handbook of Research on Acceleration Programs for SMEs* (pp. 162-178).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/microfinance/315910